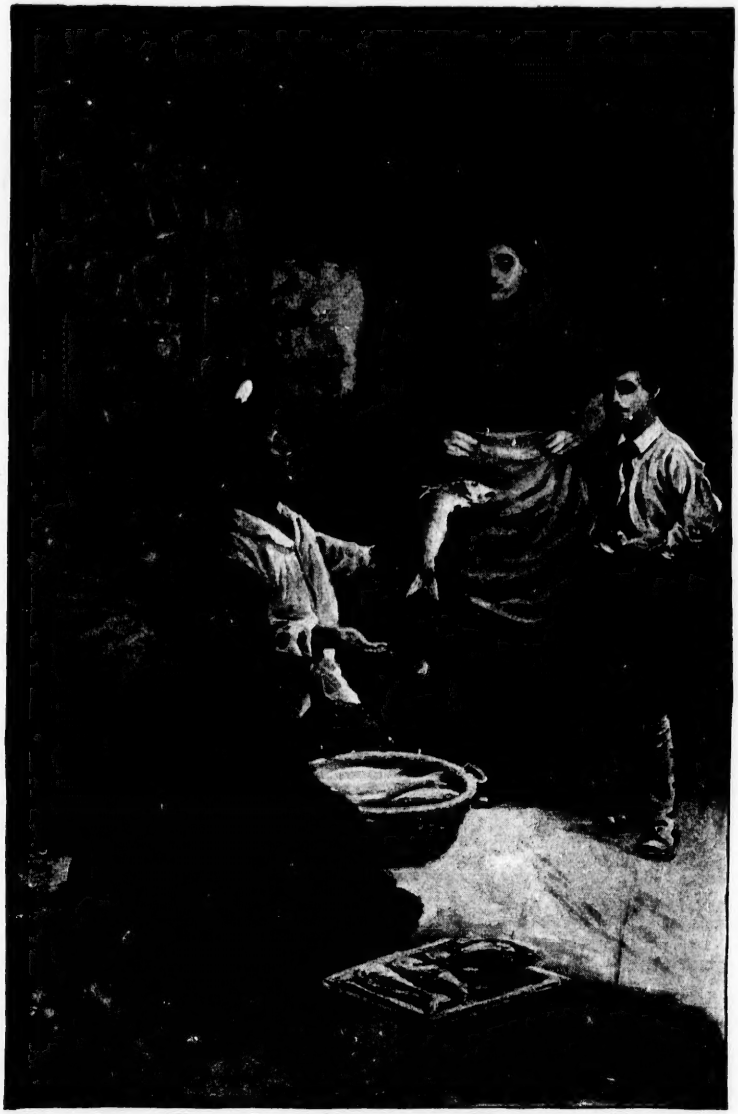
THE YOUNG EMIGRANTS



Indian Peddlers.

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THE YOUNG EMIGRANTS

A STORY FOR BOYS. BY C. L. JOHNSTONE

LONDON, EDINBURGH,
AND NEW YORK
THOMAS NELSON
AND SONS

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THE YOUNG EMIGRANTS.

CHAPTER I.

OFF TO LIVERPOOL.

"COME, ladies, please make haste; the train can't wait here all day," said the civil old station-master at Cranbourne Road, to two women who were detaining a youth about to start with rather prolonged leave-takings. They stepped back, the boy jumped in, and the train was off, though, poor souls, they watched it with tender eyes till the last carriage was out of sight.

"I was sorry to hurry you, I'm sure," said the stationmaster; "but you will see the lad again some day, a fine, strapping fellow, when his fortune's made and he comes back to look for a sweetheart."

"Ah! but it's sore parting from him," said the mother, wiping her eyes; "though they tell me there

is less temptation for them across the sea, so I have reconciled myself to it."

A boy of about eleven was buying a penny magazine at the bookstall, and listened eagerly to this conversation. "May I ask," he said, "if your son has gone to Canada? I want to go there myself so much, but I do not know how to manage it."

"You are rather little to go," said the person addressed. "My boy is eighteen."

"He was out of work, and some rather bad young fellows were leading him astray," said the other in a low voice.

"Yes, but he loved his mother," put in the young emigrant's parent; "and if you love yours," she added, addressing Johnnie Wilmot, "you had better stay in England and work for her."

"But father is alive, and there are many of us," replied the boy. "I hear that fellows of my age can get work better in Canada than in London."

"Well, they do say that," said the poor mother. "My son read a great deal about it on that steamship bill," and she pointed to one of the Allan Line Co.'s placards on the station wall. "He then applied to the society which helps young men out, and our clergyman also gave him a loan. That was how it was."

Johnnie thanked her for her information, and began to study the "steamship bill," on which was depicted a vessel in full sail. It also pointed out that steerage passengers were conveyed for four pounds each to Quebec; that the food on board was of the best quality, with beef and suet-pudding on Sundays, and as much as each person could eat; and that everybody who went to Canada could get good wages, if he chose to work.

Johnnie's father was a postman, and naturally saw very little of his family. There were eight children, and Johnnie, the eldest of them, only eleven. As he walked home from the station, the boy resolved that he would ask his mother if he might start out to Canada in the following spring. He had heard a good deal about it, for a carpenter's apprentice that he used to know had gone out there, and had lately written home to his relations that it was a very fine country, and he only wondered that they did not all come out there to stop.

"But, child," said his mother, when he told her of the idea he had got into his head, "what could you do out there? Ned Smith knows a trade, and can build himself a house out of the pine woods if need be; but *you* can do nothing to bring you in wages."

"O mother," said Johnnie, "I can run errands. People in Canada must want errand-boys as well as in England; and, besides, Ned Smith may help me to a job, if I get near him."

"But whereabout is he?" said Mrs. Wilmot. "Canada is a large place, and you may be a thousand miles away from each other."

"A thousand miles?" said Johnnie; "why, that would be as far as from London to Vienna. Indeed I do not quite recollect where he is, and his brother said the place was not marked on our maps."

Just at that moment the father of the family came in for his tea, and Mrs. Wilmot told him what they were talking about. "Well," he said, "I have often thought myself that we should have to send some of our children to the colonies, and Canada seems nearer than most of them. I hear that boys no older than Johnnie go there, and can pick up a living; and perhaps if he went out first, he would be able to make a home for the rest. But I have to pass the Canadian Agency to-night, so I will just look in and ask about it."

The result of the inquiry was that a clergyman, the Rev. George Evans, was going to take out a large party of boys to Canada in April, and that if

little Wilmot would apply to him, he would allow him to join his party at the Euston Station, and they would all travel together to Liverpool, and embark on board the steamship *Sardinian*. The railway fare would be included in the steamer ticket, and Mr. Evans would see the boys through the Custom House at Quebec, and on to the train which was to convey them to the great North-West Territory, more than fifteen hundred miles from where they would first set foot on Canadian soil.

Johnnie had a little money in the post-office savings-bank, saved up from the pence he got for holding a horse, running errands, and assisting in the post-office on Christmas Eve and New-Year's Day. His father also had a little laid by, and Johnnie promised that, if he would advance what was required for his journey, which at his age would be half-fare, he would faithfully pay him back when he was in a position to do so. The boy bought with his own money two railway rugs and a few tools, and his mother, like the good, industrious woman that she was, made him some flannel shirts, knitted him some warm pairs of stockings, and gave him a corduroy suit, as well as one of thick, warm serge lined with flannel.

Mr. Evans took the boys by a midnight train from Euston, to save the expense of sleeping in Liverpool, because all the steerage passengers had to be ready to embark at ten o'clock in the morning. Mrs. Wilmot would have liked very much to go and see her son off at Liverpool, but she could not afford the time or the money, so she contented herself with coming to the Euston Station, to see the last of him there.

Johnnie felt very uncomfortable in his mind when he was having his supper just before going to the station. The other children had already been put to bed, and his father wished him good-bye at home. "Well, Johnnie," he said, "I suppose you will have grown into a tall man before I see you again, and a rich one too, perhaps."

"I have been very happy at home," said Johnnie, "but I knew I must get my own living somehow, and it would be more expense if I learned a trade here."

"Yes, and we should never make a scholar of you, I am sure," said his father. "But all the same, be a good boy where you are going. Keep out of public-houses, and be honest to your employers."

"And go to church, Johnnie, whenever you have the chance," said his mother; "but in those wild

parts I am afraid it won't be every Sunday by a long way off."

"Well, you can read a piece out of your Bible and prayer-book, even when you cannot go to church, Johnnie," said his father, "so mind and do that."

Johnnie promised he would, and then he and his father carried his box between them to meet the omnibus which would pass nearest to Euston Station. It came up sooner than they expected, so there was no more time for saying good-bye, and he and his mother jumped into it.

The great London and North-Western Railway terminus was brilliantly lighted up, and the book-stalls and refreshment-rooms were closed for the night, and very little seemed to be going on compared with what there is in the day-time. Johnnie and his mother were very early, and one by one the rest of the party began to arrive. At last about fifty boys and two or three young men had assembled on the platform, before their conductor, Mr. Evans, made his appearance. They began to make acquaintance with one another. One was going to join a brother, in trade at Montreal; another had taken his ticket to Vancouver, all the way across British North America; a third was bound for Toronto, a large city close to a

lake; a fourth was going to Winnipeg. Johnnie was booked for Qu'appelle, between Winnipeg and Regina, by Mr. Evans's advice, because it was an important farming centre, and there could be no doubt that he would easily get some sort of work in that neighbourhood.

Johnnie had never lived in the country in his life, and his chief acquaintance with sheep and cows was to see them driven along the streets of London on their way to Smithfield Market. But he had read in the circulars about Canada that people could get free grants of land out there, and become the owners of an estate and a house in time, and this was what he hoped to do when he was old enough.

Mr. Evans arrived about ten minutes before the train started, and packed the boys into a number of third-class carriages. He observed that they would have plenty of time on board ship to make up for the loss of a night's rest. Still some of them did contrive to sleep on the way to Liverpool. Little Wilmot's eyes were growing rather damp when his mother came up to wish him good-bye. "Mind," she said, "and write a long letter directly you get settled. Father says the postage will be twopence halfpenny in Canadian money, so you must fill it full to make it worth so much. And there's sixpence, Johnnie, to

get some oranges in Liverpool to take on board, for the salt sea air will make you thirsty; and they can hardly afford to give you fruit, I should think, when they charge so little for your passage and food." Poor Johnnie quite wished he was coming home again from Liverpool, and not going to Canada just at present. But it was too late to change his mind. The train whistled, and they were off, while all the last words he had meant to say to his mother had got choked up in his throat, and he could not anyhow get them out, and perhaps it was the same with her.

A few more people had come to see their boys off, and the brother of one of the young men was going with them as far as Liverpool. This young man had paid four pounds extra, and was going second class instead of in the steerage. He said that if that did not look comfortable he should pay still more, and go first class. Johnnie thought he must be very rich.

It seemed strange to be rushing through the country when all the houses were closed and their owners asleep, and then to see the early morning beginning to break and the sun to rise. But by the time they arrived in Liverpool the whole city was awake, and Johnnie looked forward to his first view of the sea.

CHAPTER II.

THE VOYAGE TO QUEBEC.

IF Mr. Evans had not known the way to the docks and landing-stage from the Lime Street Station in Liverpool, there were plenty of people to tell him; for numbers from all parts of England and Scotland were going the same way. The boys' boxes were all conveyed on a large cart; but each carried his railway rugs, as they marched like young soldiers through the streets. There was the tender moored to the landing-stage, from which they were to embark to reach the huge ship anchored far out in the river Mersey; and close by, Mr. Evans bought each of the boys a tin mug, spoon, plate, and little can. A few of them also invested in a sixpenny pillow and a ninepenny straw mattress, to make the hammocks in which they would have to sleep warmer and more comfortable.

There was a great crowd on the landing-stage—Germans, going to Canada to escape being obliged to serve as soldiers in their own country; tall, fair-haired Norwegians; a family that looked almost like Chinese, but who spoke German, and told Mr. Evans, who knew their language, that they had come from a distant part of the German Empire, close to Russian Poland; Scottish crofters, Irishmen, all mingled together; and another crowd consisting of friends who had come to say good-bye. Ah! many of them will never meet again till in the life which knows no partings; and several seemed to realize this, for they looked very sad.

A sharp wind blew down the river from the sea, making the landing-stage somewhat unsteady, and giving everybody a very slight foretaste of what they would have to endure in the Irish Sea. The vessel was loading nearly all the day; for the first-class passengers were not obliged to be on board till four p.m. Then at six the anchor was slowly lifted, and the *Sardinian* sailed out of the river in time to cross the bar, or large sandbank at the mouth of the Mersey, with the high tide, and before dark. The sea-gulls flew about the masts of the ship, and occasionally dipped into the sea, and floated on the waves.

Gradually the Liverpool houses and spires disappeared, and the other ships sailing in the Mersey were left behind. Then the land itself began to disappear, and by night the ship was pushing through the rough waves on the Irish Sea, which were breaking against the vessel with a loud splash. All the passengers were in their berths and hammocks by that time, and Johnnie wrapped up in his railway rugs was fast asleep in his. The hammocks swung with the motion of the vessel, and lulled their occupants into quiet repose. The young man who talked of taking a first-class berth if he did not like the look of the second class, had done so, but he did not sleep so well as Johnnie. His cabin was close and stuffy, for there were two other men in it, who kept the door and ventilator shut; while Johnnie was near one of the ship's ventilators, where the air was always fresh and pure, so he did not suffer from sea-sickness. When the morning came they were stopped at Moville on the coast of Ireland, to pick up the London mails which were brought up Lough Foyle in a small steamer from Londonderry. Then another start was made, and in a few hours the *Sardinian* was fairly on the Atlantic, with nothing to be seen but the sea and sky.

There were over a thousand people on board, so the deck was crowded every fine day. A few of them at first thought they could not eat the provisions served out to the steerage passengers—the tea poured out of a watering-can, the potatoes boiled in their skins, and the butter after a day or two having rather a strong smell and flavour; but the sea air soon made them so hungry that they were very glad when dinner-time came. The bread was baked fresh every day, and large rolls, two or three for everybody, were light and white enough for the Queen herself. The pea-soup was also excellent. Mr. Evans used to come and talk to the boys and men in the forecastle, and as one of them possessed an accordion, they used to sing hymns to it as well as sea songs. There was a concert given on board in the first-class saloon, and Mr. Evans invited all his boys to attend it.

On Sunday a service was held in the saloon, which was crammed. Mr. Evans and another clergyman conducted it, using part of the form of prayer for those at sea which is found at the end of the English prayer-book. The sermon was specially addressed to the young emigrants. The preacher reminded them that almost all of them had left be-

hind fond parents or other relations, anxiously hoping to hear from them, and probably most of them were at that very time offering up prayers on their behalf. Some of the young men, he said, had perhaps given a good deal of trouble at home, and were now thinking of this, and regretting that they had not shown more gratitude for the parental love and care bestowed upon them. But they might still show it in the new life that lay before them, by comporting themselves steadily and industriously, doing their best to make the parental name an honoured one on the other side of the Atlantic; writing regularly to their relations, and occasionally assisting them if they were in need. Life in the colonies had temptations as elsewhere, and they were more easily met and conquered at first than when they had once been allowed to gain the mastery. The Almighty never permits us to be tempted beyond what we are able to withstand. To yield to these temptations (which the preacher enumerated) showed weakness of character—weakness unbecoming to a Christian, weakness unbecoming to a man. It would be very unlikely that he would ever have the opportunity of addressing any of them again, certainly not all together as they were now; so he availed himself of

the chance to speak plainly, and to remind them of the vows taken for them in their baptism, and which many of them had renewed on their own behalf when they were brought for confirmation to the bishop.

There were several pocket-handkerchiefs brought out when the preacher alluded to the fond parents at home; and that night many of the listeners offered up the petitions, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," more fervently than they had ever done. "Prayers without thoughts never to heaven can go," wrote Shakespeare three hundred years ago, but young people are very apt to forget this.

The next day two enormous icebergs were seen in the distance; the sun shining upon them made them reflect different colours like a rainbow. The ship was nearing the coast of Newfoundland, and they came in sight of large fields of ice. There was actually a vessel stuck fast in the ice, and it had left Liverpool a week before the *Sardinian*, which, by putting on extra steam, contrived to avoid the same fate. Ah, how glad all on board were when they saw land on both sides, and found they had entered the great river St. Lawrence! The ship stopped for a few minutes while the English mail-bags were put

off on to a boat to convey them to Fort Rimouski on the shore, whence they would go by railway to all parts of Canada. One very impatient traveller landed there too with his portmanteau, for he thought he had had quite enough of the sea. Eleven days after leaving Liverpool the *Sardinian* was moored alongside the quay at Quebec.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE TRAIN.

"Cheer, boys, cheer! here's wealth for honest labour;
Cheer, boys, cheer for the new and happy land!"

THIS song proceeded from the steerage of the *Sardinian* while preparations were being made to enable the passengers to walk on shore at Quebec. Who has not heard of Quebec, and of the great battle on the Heights of Abraham, between the French under General Montcalm and the British force commanded by the hero General Wolfe? That battle decided the fate of Canada, and New France, as this part of North America was called by its earliest European colonists, became from that time a British possession, which now enjoys almost complete self-government.

But Quebec is still quite a French town in appearance, and has a strong look of Calais. Some of the

people wore red caps like those of French sailors, and Johnnie heard them talking French as they stared at the English emigrants. A special train was put on for the passengers of the *Sardinian*, and was to start as soon as the baggage had been examined by the Custom House officers, and this was a very lengthy proceeding. It must be remembered that although Canada belongs to England, it makes its own laws, and it will not allow people to bring new clothes or other manufactured goods into the country, of the value of more than four shillings, without paying a heavy tax upon them, if they are intended to be sold. The Canadian Government is, however, anxious to induce emigrants to settle in the country, and its officials have directions not to be very strict with the goods brought by emigrants from England, if they are clearly intended for their own use; so Mr. Evans had told all his boys to put "Emigrant" under their names on their boxes, and the Custom House officers did not even open them. These same officers looked very carefully into the baggage brought by some of the first-class passengers, and charged them heavily for new things they brought with them; but then they were known to be ordinary travellers, who had been through the country before

There were refreshment-rooms at the Quebec station, where loaves, cheeses, and other substantial articles of food were sold, and Mr. Evans bought a number of loaves, some butter, a cheese, and a few tins of potted meat, for the use of his party on the journey to Winnipeg. He told them they would probably have no opportunity of buying anything more to eat on the way, so they must be careful of their provisions.

A few boys found situations at Quebec, but all the rest went on in the train—"the excursion train from the old country," as the Quebec stationmaster called it.

The carriages, or cars as the Canadians term them, are much larger than English ones, and will hold about fifty people if crammed full. There is a kind of second story of sleeping-places, which slide up and down from the top, according as they are required or not; so the passengers were able to stretch themselves out at night, and sleep as well as the shaking of the carriages would permit. At the end of each carriage there was a cistern of water for drinking or washing, and also a little balcony on which the boys stood and looked out at the country they were passing on their way.

Rather a stirring incident took place on this little balcony. A splendid waterfall was to be seen, and the boys crowded the platform, one of them climbing on to the railing. There was a good deal of pushing and hustling, and somehow this one boy was pushed off the railing on to the railroad. The train was going at its greatest speed. There were a scream and a rush, and the conductor was called, and as soon as it could be done the train was stopped. It had already run a mile beyond where the boy had fallen, but he had soon picked himself up, and when the train stopped, was seen running after it. The engine-driver declared that the next time such a thing happened, the boy who fell should be left to look after himself, for they could not be stopping the Canadian express on account of stupid little English chaps.

The boys were in the train for five days before they arrived at Winnipeg. Only one or two of the stations had refreshment-rooms, and there was so little sold in them, and such a high price was asked, that only the older and richer people had a chance of buying anything. They passed Ottawa, the capital of Canada, but the London boys thought that it looked like nothing but a village. Then they came to a huge lake all covered with ice. They could not

see the other side, so to them it seemed as big as the sea. They passed through forests of fir trees with little wooden huts among them for the wood-cutters; and they noticed in some parts that the fir and larch trees were growing on the top of granite rocks. A Norwegian emigrant said it reminded him of Norway. Then they left the trees behind, and came to a bare, open country, and very early one morning the train drew up in the middle of a town which they were told was Winnipeg. They heard that they should stay here for several hours, till another train was ready, in which they would continue their journey.

It was a great relief to all the emigrants to be able to take a little exercise after so many days' confinement in the train. The Winnipeg station was the largest they had yet seen in Canada. A great many people came out of the town into the large waiting-room to see if they could engage any of the new-comers as hired boys or girls; for that is the term used in Canada for those whom we call by the old-fashioned name of servants. One young man accepted an offer to become a waiter in a hotel; a young woman, well dressed and wearing spectacles, was taken as a governess; but there did not seem to be any demand for the younger boys, and Johnnie

was almost the youngest of them all. A clergyman on the train, who was also going to the North-West, told them not to be down-hearted, for they would find farmers very glad to engage them in the agricultural districts, which would be better for them than a large town. The boys had exhausted all their provisions, and went out into the town to try to obtain some more. They saw some tempting-looking apples and oranges, but they were dearer than in London. The bread looked very light and good, and eggs and butter were not dear. The shopkeepers asked them if they had come from the "old country," by which they meant had they come from England. Although the lakes they had passed were covered with ice, and it was only April, the sun felt as hot as it often does in England at midsummer; and an ice-cart set down a large lump of ice as clear as glass on the wooden pavement in front of all the butchers' and fishmongers' shops. The boys noticed that almost all the houses were built of wood, as well as the "side-walks," as the Canadians call the pavement for foot-passengers. They read a great many German, Norwegian, Italian, and even Chinese names over the shops and houses, and they saw several negroes walking about, who had probably come from the United States. Winnipeg

is over eleven hundred miles from Quebec, and Johnnie had still about three hundred and sixty miles to go before he could reach Qu'appelle.

About three o'clock in the afternoon the train was ready to start, and the boy who was going to Vancouver was told that he need not get out of it again till he reached his destination. Johnnie would arrive at Qu'appelle about half-past four the next morning. One of the young men who came with the party said that he had inquired for something to do in Winnipeg, but that as he did not like the occupations he was offered, he meant to go on to Regina, about forty miles beyond Qu'appelle, and enlist in the North-West Mounted Police, who, he heard, were a very fine body of men. He would get two shillings a day at once, his clothes and his board and lodging, with very little to do. A clergyman in the train told him that it was not always a good thing for a young man to have very little to do, for he was more liable to be tempted to gamble and drink, particularly in a new country away from all his friends; but this young man seemed very confident that there was no fear that he would fall into such errors. He had heard that there was an amateur dramatic club in Regina, and many amusements.

They had now entered on the prairie, but saw belts of trees occasionally in the distance. The boys thought of the waste of wood they had seen in Northern Ontario as they came along, where they had noticed that trees had been burnt off the ground to clear them away. Here they were in a part of Manitoba where wood was evidently scarce.

Johnnie was afraid to go to sleep, lest he should miss Qu'appelle; but the conductor told him he would wake him up at the next station before they came to it. The young clergyman asked him if he were going to a situation there. Johnnie said he had to look for one. Had he brought a character with him from his schoolmaster or minister, or from a magistrate? No, Johnnie had never thought that would be wanted.

"It is better to have one," said the young clergyman, "because we get a good many young scamps out here, and the farmers are beginning to be afraid of English boys, unless they are recommended by some responsible person." He asked the boy a few more questions about his parents and where they lived, and evidently thought the answers satisfactory, for he wrote down something on a paper and said to him: "Here are the names of two or three farmers round there, one of whom I think wants a boy. I have



Johnnie finds a Friend.

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mentioned you below as recommended by me, as you seem a quiet, steady fellow, and have not joined with some of the other boys in the train in making a disturbance to the annoyance of older passengers."

The conductor did as he promised, and roused up Johnnie at Indian Head Station. He looked out: it was beginning to grow light, and the landscape was prettier, being interspersed with groups of trees, underwood, and bushes, which the Canadians call bluffs. The next station was Qu'appelle. At Quebec a brass ticket with a number had been put on to his box with a little strap, and he had been given another just like it. When he showed this to the porter, his luggage was identified among the heaps of other boxes by the corresponding number upon it, and was handed over to him. Then there was a shout of "Hurry up, all on board"—the Canadian way of saying "Please make haste"—and the train proceeded on its way, leaving Johnnie and a few more standing on the platform in the early morning, hardly knowing what to do next.

Some of them with more money than Johnnie said they should go to a hotel. There were two close by—the Leland and the Queen. They left their luggage on the platform, so Johnnie asked if he might leave

his box and rugs there till he knew where he was going, and then he walked into the street. As it was Sunday morning, all was quiet; the houses were closed, and only one or two people were about. He had some of the bread left that he had bought at Winnipeg, and he ate that for his breakfast.

The town consisted entirely of wooden houses, and there was a wooden church with a metal spire. There was a wide green near to it where some cows were feeding. Presently the young emigrant saw a boy bringing some water from a well on the pasture; and as the dry bread had made him rather thirsty, he tied his jacket and waistcoat and pocket-handkerchief together, and fastened his little tin mug to the end of them, and tried to reach the water with this rope of clothes; but it was not quite long enough.

Just then a young woman came out of one of the houses to meet a cow that was coming up to be milked. She saw what Johnnie was doing, and asked him if he were thirsty, and where he came from. She seemed very kind, so he told her that he had just come from England, and was going to try to find work. She gave him a cup of milk, and said there were many people round there who wanted boys, but he was rather young. Was he not

very cold and tired standing about there? He might come into her house if he liked, and he should have some breakfast, if he would wash up afterwards and clean the boots.

Johnnie was very thankful for the offer, and followed the young woman into one of the wooden houses. There was an iron closed stove in the middle of the kitchen, and a saucepan of porridge simmering upon it, and a pan of potatoes and bacon frizzling—a more sumptuous meal than he had eaten since he left the *Sardinian*. His kind friend lived with her mother and brother; so while breakfast was preparing he cleaned the boots, then fetched some wood for the stove from a great pile that stood in the little yard, and after breakfast washed up. When she asked him what his father was, and he told her that he was a letter-carrier, he found that there was no such occupation as his father's in the north-west of Canada, and that letters remained at the post-offices till the owners fetched them. Even the telegrams were not delivered.

At last the bell began to ring for the morning service, and Johnnie went to church. Some boys think that being far from home is a reason why they need not go; but the church bell reminded Johnnie

of home, and as he was very simple, it was quite a surprise but certainly a pleasure to him to find that not only the same prayer-book was used at Qu'appelle as in the church to which his mother was accustomed to send him in England, but also the same hymn-book. There was a surpliced choir, and he thought that perhaps some day he might be admitted to it. The congregation looked just like an English one, as it might well do, for Qu'appelle is almost an English colony. Some of them came from quite a distance, and drove there in all kinds of conveyances.

Several people in the church noticed Johnnie, and recognized him by his fair, soft face as an English boy just out of England. After church, the wife of one of the farmers who had gone to "hitch up," as the Canadians call putting a horse in the shafts, spoke to the boy, and asked him if he had got a place yet. When he said he had not, she said they wanted a help; what could he do? could he milk or ride? Johnnie had never been in the way of doing either, but he said he thought he could soon learn. Well, he could chop wood, she supposed. That he had never done, but if he had an axe he would try.

"You are from London, I suppose?" she said; "for you seem to have been brought up very helpless."

"Yes, ma'am," said Johnnie, "but I helped myself all the way here."

"Well," she said, "that was something certainly. I suppose you can light a stove and do house-work?"

Johnnie said he could wash up, and make a bed, and look after children, and clean lamps, and light a fire; so the end of it was, when her husband came with the "buckboard," as the Canadians call a kind of gig with a place behind for luggage, she suggested to him that he should engage this little fellow. Mr. Freeman therefore offered him a dollar a month.

"A dollar!" said Johnnie; "that is four shillings —it is very little."

"No; a dollar is four and twopence," said Mr. Freeman.

"I owe my father money," said Johnnie. "I must earn a little more than that."

"Well," said Mr. Freeman, "suppose we say a dollar and a half, the first month at any rate, and then I shall see what you're worth. You will have to work hard for that, you are such a little chap. Nobody would give you more unless he wanted a jockey."

So Johnnie engaged himself, and sat with his box at the back of the gig during the six miles which lay between Mr. Freeman's farm and the town. In

Canada they call railways roads, and carriage-roads trails. This trail was like a cart-track among grass and bushes. They passed two or three solitary wooden houses, nearly a mile away from each other, and then Johnnie's future abode came in view—a wooden house like the rest, with out-buildings such as he had never seen out of Canada; also some ricks and a few cocks and hens. The complete silence the whole way had struck the boy more than anything else, and there seemed to be nobody here but themselves. However, when they went into the house, they found a girl minding two little children and setting dinner. The house looked so small that he began to wonder where he was to sleep.

CHAPTER IV.

IN ASSINIBOIA.

JOHNNIE'S bedroom consisted of a corner of the loft among the rafters where clothes were dried in winter, and all kinds of things put away. The pipe of the kitchen stove went through it, which would keep him from freezing in the winter-time. His bed was a sack of ticking on the floor stuffed with hay, and a black blanket, so he found his railway rugs very useful to cover him. He asked the hired girl whether they never used sheets in Canada. "Oh yes," she said, "many people do in the summer; but the hired boys don't have them on account of the trouble and expense of washing them."

He found he was expected to go to bed in the dark, so far as it could be called dark; for the heavens were illuminated with a splendid aurora, and the moon and stars shone with a brilliancy he had never

seen in England, even during the one night of his life which he had spent out of the suburbs of London, and that was on his way to Liverpool. He was soon fast asleep, and the night seemed to have been a great deal too short when Mrs. Freeman came up the ladder and shook him to rouse him up. He must go with Freeman and be shown how to milk the cows. A bowl of porridge was given him for breakfast, which he ate directly he came in; and as soon as that was over, he had to go and help with the "seeding," which is the Canadian term for sowing the corn.

The melting of the snow had left the ground bare, and Mr. Freeman, like all careful farmers, had done his ploughing in the autumn. The Canadian North-West summer is too short to ripen corn unless it is put into the ground as soon as the ice and snow are off it; for there is often very hot weather in April, and if advantage is not taken of it there may be ice and snow again before June, which will not hurt the seed in the ground, but would interfere with it being put in. April is often a very busy time with farmers. The air was fresh and exhilarating, and Johnnie worked well; so Mr. Freeman told him if he would keep on like that, he would add another dollar to his wages at the end of the month.

As they had got up early, they were ready for dinner before twelve. It consisted of fried salt pork, fried potatoes, tea, and some dried apples soaked and stewed. These apples were considered rather a luxury; for apples will not grow in this part of Canada, so they are dried and sent from Ontario for winter use in the North-West. No one had any beer, but, after the Canadian fashion, they all had a cup of tea. As the farmer smoked a pipe for half an hour after dinner, Johnnie helped to clear the table and wash up. He asked Alice whether they had had a boy before he came.

"Oh yes," said Mrs. Freeman—"we had a lad much bigger than you; but we sent him off without his wages, because he let our old mare be killed on the road." Then she explained that in the summer a boy had to be kept to keep the cattle and horses from straying on to other people's or their own crops, and to look after them altogether. Sometimes the animals strayed on to the railway line which ran across their property, and it was the boy's business to keep them off; for although the only passenger trains ran through at night, still freight or luggage trains were liable to pass at any time.

"And did the railway company pay you for the

loss?" said Johnnie, who had read of people in England obtaining compensation for accidents on the railway.

"Oh no, child," she said. "The C.P.R." (Canadian Pacific Railway) "does not hold itself responsible for any accidents of that description. It is supposed that people ought to fence. Oh, it was a shocking sight to see the poor old mare, who had carried me so often, lying torn in pieces on the line, with the little foal standing over her not knowing what to make of it!"

"It must be a lesson of caution to you, boy," said Freeman, "for you will have to herd this summer."

It was several days before Johnnie's first letter was written home, and then he found there was nowhere nearer than Qu'appelle to post it. He had to wait till the farmer or his wife went to the town, and would take it for him. He felt very homesick at times — everybody does on first leaving his own country—but he thought he should only distress his mother if he told her so, and he felt sure he should get used to the peculiarities of the country, and like it very much in time.

The birds were coming back after the long winter, the swallows returning to their old nests under the

eaves of the wooden roofs. Wild ducks appeared on a neighbouring lake, and Mr. Freeman often shot some for dinner. Even some wild deer were seen on one occasion. There was plenty of animal life now to break the silence of the woods and prairie. A little creature called a gopher, something between a squirrel and a rabbit, abounded, and was often so tame that the children sometimes caught them in their hands. It burrows in a hole, and lives on corn and green food, so is the terror of farmers and gardeners. As the summer came on, the government offered a reward for every hundred that were killed on account of the mischief that they do, and Johnnie increased his wages by killing them and showing the tails as a proof.

One day Mr. Freeman drove back from Qu'appelle with a letter for Johnnie. The boy's face beamed with delight. It must be from home. But oh, what a disappointment! It had a three-cent stamp on it, showing that it had come from some place in Canada. He opened it, and found it was from the young man who had meant to go into the North-West Mounted Police. The writer said that he had spent all his money in staying at a hotel looking for work and not able to find it, and he had only enough left to bring

him to Qu'appelle. He had sprained his arm, so he could not get into the police till he was well, and Johnnie was the only person he knew of, except at a long distance. As he supposed that Johnnie had found work at Qu'appelle, he wrote to ask him to tell the farmer who employed him that he would come and work for him if he offered high enough wages. He meant to leave Regina by a freight-train the day after he wrote.

Johnnie read the letter to Mr. Freeman, who whistled, but did not look much pleased. Mrs. Freeman inquired if the young man called himself a gentleman, and whether he had come out in the steerage.

"Oh no," said Johnnie; "he was a first-class passenger."

"Well, then," said Mrs. Freeman, "that sort does not do for us. They are for ever fretting about the food. If I stood over the stove in summer, cooking till I was just dead, I can't satisfy them, and they throw away and waste a good bit too. My husband and I never found such as he worth his victuals and washing, let alone wages."

"Well," said Freeman, "as he has already been in Canada some little time, perhaps he has learned to

expect only what is reasonable. I would take him for a week on trial only for his board, and if he will really work, why then I will give him wages for the summer. That's fair enough. He may be able to herd, if he can do nothing else."

Freeman was obliged to send some farm produce into the town the next day, so he said Johnnie might take it and bring back his friend. The young man, William Holmes by name, was standing rather disconsolately by the post-office. He had not a dollar left to pay for his night's lodging, and borrowed it from Johnnie, who, rather proud perhaps of being able to lend, produced it at once—a dirty-looking paper dollar. Holmes did not like the idea of having no wages for a week; but, as he said, he could not starve. A letter from England overweight had been forwarded to him from Regina, and he had not got five cents to pay for it. So he mounted the buck-board and drove back with Johnnie, complaining all the time of the North-West, and regretting that he had ever come out. He was not at first much pleased with his new quarters, where a sack filled with hay in the same garret with Johnnie had been provided for him. He thought the place extremely lonely; but he took to his work pretty well, and had brought

a gun with him, and was able to shoot, so he varied the dinner occasionally with a prairie fowl. He had not really tried for a place in the North-West Mounted Police, otherwise his very slight sprain would not have interfered; for when he found that he would have to enlist for five years, he came to the conclusion that he might want to go back to England long before he was discharged. He thought his best plan would be to take up a homestead as soon as he knew a little about farming, and then sell his land at a good price whenever he could, and go home with the proceeds.

It became extremely hot in July, and the mosquitoes were very troublesome. The animals rushed about the fields to escape from them, and towards sunset, when they were at their worst, the farmer made the boys collect weeds and rubbish and light it. Being damp it slowly smouldered, sending out a thick, black smoke; and the cows and horses would get as close to it as they could, to shelter themselves from the mosquitoes, which kept away out of the suffocating fumes.

But the heat and the mosquitoes do not stop work on Canadian farms. Between seeding and harvest the farmers plough for the next spring, besides attending to the calves, lambs, and chickens, making

butter, and trying to raise a few vegetables. The boys were up at four a.m., but took some rest in the hot part of the day. Freeman said there would be plenty of time to sleep in the winter. The nights were always cool, and in the morning, where the windows had been left open, the window-sills were strewed with dead mosquitoes, killed by the chilly air.

Now and then Indians came round with things to sell. They were dressed in European clothes, but some of the men wore their hair long. They brought fish, and excellent fish it was, with as much on its bones as a salmon has, but the flesh white instead of pink. The Indians would sit down on the floor, take out their pipes, and begin to smoke, waiting till Mrs. Freeman would agree to their terms. They were very honest, and never tried to steal anything, although they seemed to be very poor. The women carried the babies fastened up in a shawl on their backs, to keep their hands free to hold the things they sold. They seemed to do most of the work. "Plenty mosquitoes, plenty wheat," said an old Indian to Johnnie. He meant that the same wet season which brought mosquitoes was good for the harvest.

Canadians look forward all week to Sunday. Then work is laid by, and they go to the nearest town to

church or chapel, and to meet their friends. Every one cannot be spared at once off a farm, so Johnnie could not always go to church; but he heard of boys elsewhere who lived fifteen miles away, and hardly ever had a chance of going there or into the town.

He never wore a coat and waistcoat all the week, but when he put his cloth coat on one of the first times that it was his turn to go to church, he found it was beginning to grow too small for him, though plenty of room had been allowed when it was made for his increase in breadth. He foresaw he should have to get another before winter. Each month he was punctually paid his wages, when he sent a dollar to his father towards paying his debt, and put the rest into the post-office savings-bank, which in Canada gives four per cent. interest. He kept the paper money pinned inside his Bible till he could take it to the town.

The hay-harvest was over, and great anxiety began to be felt lest some night the thermometer should run down below freezing-point and spoil the corn before it was fit to cut. The nights grew cooler, and even went down to 31° F.; but Freeman said it would not spoil the corn till it was two or three degrees below that. However, he became very un-

easy when the wind blew from the north, and he was once up all night making fires at the side of his fields, that the smoke might blow across them and mitigate the severity of the frost. The swallows were all gone and the gophers were retiring into their holes for the winter by the time the wheat was ripe, and then there was a rush to get it stacked before the first fall of snow.

Mr. Freeman having been settled for some years, had saved enough money to buy a Binder reaping-machine. It is supposed to do the work of twelve men, and while one man drives, a man and boy, or two boys, follow to prop up the sheaves which the machine turns out ready tied up. It is easily put out of order by an ignorant hand, and young settlers who have bought one with borrowed money are often obliged to reap their corn with a scythe or sickle, for on first starting the machine is damaged, and has to be sent back into the town to be put to rights.

The few weeks during which the harvest is being got in are most important ones in Canada. Wages rise to a high figure, but the farmer expects work for them, and men are out in the fields from four in the morning till nine or ten at night, their food being brought to them to save time. Labourers and horses

alike are exhausted when the corn is all stacked; but if they can get the loan of a steam-thresher at once, there is little time for rest till the threshing is all done. Some farmers keep their corn back, in the hope that prices may go up during the winter; but many prefer to sell it as soon as they have a chance, because they want ready money, and with all the risks of rats, mice, and fire, they feel that a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.

William Holmes had long begun to flag in his work. During the "haying," as the Canadians call it, he would stray off in the middle of the day to the saskatoon bushes which were loaded with fruit. The saskatoon is a mixture of the black currant and bilberry, and the North-West farmer's wife makes it into excellent jam and jelly for the winter. An hour for dinner was all well enough, but Holmes extended this relaxation into two or three hours. Then in the evening he would break off early to have a little shooting, because he could after dark get hold of an owl. He wanted to stuff his birds and send them to England. One night he brought in two beautiful white owls which had flown out under cover of night. He had killed them both.

Freeman became very irate at the sight.

"Now, Holmes," he said, "I am not going to let this sort of thing go on. That bird is the farmer's friend. It does me more good for nothing than you do for wages; and if you cannot let harmless, useful creatures alone, you had better go yourself."

The owl, besides killing rats, is a great enemy to the gopher, which, in spite of the putting of strychnine on bread about the fields, and in spite of other means taken to destroy it, still goes on increasing, for every year they seem to leave waste land to come and feed on the nearest farmer's crops.

"Very well, then," said Holmes, "pay up, and I will be off at once."

The farmer had no ready money, but gave him a cheque, which would oblige him to go into the town to cash it before looking for work elsewhere. The harvest not being over then, he relied on easily finding it. However, he was obliged to ask to be allowed to stay the next day to try to get a lift with his baggage, which included a bag full of skins. He told Johnnie he must wait a little while for the dollar he owed him, but he would send it to him some day by post, and he did this in the course of time.

CHAPTER V.

BACHELOR FARMING.

HOLMES meant to put up at one of the hotels at Qu'appelle Station for a night or two, and the evening he arrived sat down with his pipe on one of a few chairs set out in front of the door. A man who looked like a settler of some years' standing came and joined him, and by way of opening a conversation Holmes made a remark about the prospects of the harvest.

"Oh, not bad this year," said the other.

"Do you think," said Holmes, "that any of the farmers within reach want a fellow to help just now?"

"Want a fellow like yourself, I suppose?" said the other.

"Well, that is what I mean," said Holmes. "I am looking for a situation."

"Well," said the other, "I fancy the large farmers

must have arranged with their harvest-men before this, and got as many as they want; but you might find some of the smaller settlers still looking about."

"What do you think of ranching? Could I get a place on a ranch?"

"Um!" said the other. "Can you meet a half-wild horse running away, corner ways, and jump on to him bare-backed?"

"Why, of course I never had the need to do such a thing as that," said Holmes, "though I can ride a common English horse well enough, and I am not at all sure how I should manage it."

"Well, I advise you to let it alone then," said the other. "You are too great a weight to be in the saddle all day. The same horse would not stand it; you would want a second. Besides, the ranch-owners can always get half-breed boys of ten or eleven who can ride anything—catch a wild broncho by the mane, and be on its back before it has time to stop. They also don't want to be lodged as comfortably as you would, and take less wages."

"Oh, I am not so particular about wages as many are; for the fact is, I must look about soon and find something to do," said Holmes. "What should you advise?"

"Well," said the other, "I did hear a man asking at the post-office yesterday if they knew any one who could lend a hand at farm work; but he was told he could not get one for what he offered. He said something about not minding an English gentleman, if they knew of one, as he would be more companionable, for he had been one himself."

"Oh, that place will do for me," said Holmes; "I will go and ask about it at once. I find these fellows who offer such high wages expect an amount of work for them that would kill a collier. Now I never was much in that line, not even at cricket or football."

"And so your friends thought you were just the boy to make your fortune out here, I suppose?" said the other. "My good fellow, if there ever was a country where men have to work, it is here. No one knows what it is to have an idle time from the moment he can walk steadily enough to fetch the wood piece by piece from off the stack, when his mother wants it for the kitchen stove. Children are brought up different, I know, in the old country, but we have no gilded youth in the North-West."

Holmes inquired at the post-office for the address of the man who wanted help, and heard he was a Mr. Evans, a relative of the clergyman who came out with

the boys, but this Evans lived by himself a little more than a mile to the north. There were several trails across the prairie from the station to the north, and if he took the fourth of them, and then looked about among the bluffs when he had gone about a mile, he would drop upon it perhaps. This was the rather vague direction he received. He left his luggage at the hotel, and started off on foot in quest of it.

He had walked at least a mile before he met a soul, but then it was a man with a wagon, who described the path he must take. The path was narrow, and wound so closely among the bushes that it did not look as if a cart was often taken along it. In a small cleared space he came upon the settler's hut, sixteen feet by twelve, a one-roomed abode, and on a bench in front of it a man with a long beard, and a thick head of hair rather in need of scissors, growing grey, smoking a pipe, who proved to be Mr. Evans himself.

Now if any one had come upon this object in England, with a carefully-patched working coat, short corduroys, and very old gaiters which hardly met them, with an ancient pair of thick-soled boots, much in want of the cobbler and of blacking, as a termination, and a broad-brimmed straw hat by his side, the

visitor might easily have imagined that he was a repetition of one of the historic misers Elwes or Dancer. But out in the North-West he was no more of an eccentricity than any other English gentleman in search of fortune; for Evans was the son of a Welsh squire, and had been educated at Rugby and at Worcester College, Oxford.

Inside, the hut was as devoid of ornament as its owner. A shelf ran round it rather high up, and other shelves crossed it, and these were loaded with scraps of food, clothes, a few books, tools, and other articles. Two shakedowns on the floor occupied a good part of the house, one being for Evans, the other for his assistant, when he could be obtained. A chest served as a table, and there were a chair and a milking-stool. The stove-pipe running through the wooden roof necessitated a good space all round it, which made a sufficient ventilator, as the window would not open; but in winter-time this space caused a terrible draught. There was a large wooden crate near the stove, in which chickens were penned at night; and a cat sitting as close to the stove as she could get, although the weather was still very mild.

"That cat is suffering from having killed and

eaten too many gophers," said Evans. "The government advised us to put down strychnine to kill the gophers with. Of course I had to put it on bread, or something, to get them to eat it, and two fine young calves got hold of the stuff, and killed themselves with it. Then my dog got poisoned, and the cat, who was especially valuable because of the number of gophers she caught—in fact she lived upon them—at last, I suppose, ate one which had been feeding on the strychnine, for she has been ill ever since."

"And it is not so easy to get another in these parts, I suppose?" said Holmes.

"Oh no," said Evans; "cats are quite at a premium. Why, one cat with kittens to support has been known to kill sixteen gophers in one day. But that creature has a good deal of spirit. She has struggled on for two or three weeks like this, taking nothing but an occasional drop of milk; so, as she has not died yet, I think she will now pull through."

"I suppose you have lots of other animals somewhere?" said Holmes.

"Two cows, a yoke of oxen, a pony, and some cocks and hens—oh! and some ducks, but they have a poor time of it here. I shall have to kill them to prevent them from starving, with no slugs or earth-

worms to fall back upon," said Evans. "We should not call this a farm in England, hardly even in Ireland, but I am rated as a farmer here. You are not the rate-collector, are you?"

"I wish I was," said Holmes; "it would bring me in an income easily."

"Not so very easily, perhaps, my friend," said Evans, "when you were trying to get the rate out of bankrupt farmers. But you see I am no Canadian, or I should have offered you something to eat or drink by this time, only I never have anything but a raw egg or pail of milk handy. However, I am glad to see another human being, whatever errand may have brought you this way."

"Well," said Holmes, "I heard at the post-office that you wanted some one to help you out here. I thought perhaps I should do, as I am looking about for work. But I do not care to be with a Canadian; they take a little too much out of you."

"I do want some one," said Evans, "but I cannot offer much in the way of wages. You might take up a homestead in the neighbourhood, if you chose, and begin to work it and work for me at the same time; many men begin like that."

"What should you expect me to do for you?" said

Holmes. The keen air was making him feel that he was more than ready for a good meal. The prairie is certainly the place for a man to forget all dyspeptic symptoms, if he ever had any, and to feel that sufficient food is worth working for, as he simply must have it, even if the quality is not what he would have selected could he have had his choice.

"I should want you to make yourself generally useful," said Evans: "first, to help with the harvest; then to cut wood, to milk, and keep the house clean—rather a difficult job," he added, as he looked round, "with everything having to be tucked into so small a space. I spend half my time in hunting for what I want when it is hidden away under a pile of something else."

"Did you read the other day in a Manitoba paper a description of a bachelor's establishment in the North-West?" said Holmes, with a sly twinkle in his eye. "I cut it out and kept it to send home to my people. Would you like to hear it?"

"Oh yes, read it out," said Evans; "a few plain truths, no doubt."

The paragraph was headed "Bachelor Farmers."

"'There are no more amiable, industrious, unfortunate, and persevering persons among the rural popu-

lation of Manitoba than those who are known as "bachelors," generally excellent men existing in considerable numbers in various parts of the province, but becoming poorer, more unhappy, more unhealthy, and more desolate as years roll by. These hermits have not been disappointed in love; they have met with no serious misfortunes. They start to make homes on good farms, intending to settle down when they have made things comfortable around them; but instead of becoming better, matters become worse. Nor can it be otherwise. The young man rises in the morning, leaves unmade the bed that has perhaps not been made for weeks; he then feeds his horses, and in the unswept and dusty house prepares a hasty and ill-cooked breakfast, which is eaten from off unwashed dishes. The bread is generally sour or hard or dry, the butter salty and rancid, the coffee worthless, the meat burnt on one side and raw on the other. The breakfast-table is left covered by dirty dishes and slops, where a million flies gather to feed in undisturbed peacefulness. The unrefreshed bachelor goes to the field, lonely, miserable, and dyspeptic. At noon he drives his team into the stable out of the hot sun, and then turns into his shanty, and builds a hot fire in order to get dinner. Heated by hard work under

a blazing sun, a good wash, a cool room, and a well-cooked meal are what he requires, but what he cannot have.'"

"Particularly," put in Evans, "if, like me, he has only got a one-roomed house."

"'At supper,' continued Holmes, 'it is the same thing over again. His underclothing, seldom washed, becomes clogged with perspiration, and his bedclothes are in the same unhealthy condition. When he is in the distant field at work, the hawks soar around the forsaken house, and catch the chickens in the yard; the pigs get into the garden—if he has one; the calves get out of the enclosure, and suck the cows. Sometimes the deserted house burns down from a spark that may drop from the neglected stove. When the bachelor is visiting the grocery store, the mill, or the blacksmith's shop, cattle get into his grain-fields or pull down his stacks, and there is no one to let the dogs loose, and the marauders riot at will undisturbed. So the years go by: the man becomes poorer, and has that peculiar neglected look common to men who live alone. Health soon becomes impaired, and the mind often sympathizes with the body.'"

"Well, that fellow evidently attempted to do too much alone," said Evans. "I daresay he was not

satisfied with a quarter section of land, but must get hold of more; and cattle and corn don't do together, unless a man can afford to hire labour."

"But hear the remedy," said Holmes, going on reading.

"'What the bachelor requires in his home is a broad-shouldered, stirring wife that will keep the house in order, as well as the husband who owns it, and who will see that clothing and blankets are made clean and are kept so; who will serve a good, well-cooked meal, with fresh, sweet bread of her own making, and delicious butter of her own churning; who will see that groceries are good, and that proper value has been received for money expended; who will wash and mend her husband's clothing, and remove the shingle nails that have been used as substitutes for buttons; who will look after the hens' nests, and see that the dairy is kept in order, and who will place the Bible on the table when the day's work is done. The once dejected and forlorn bachelor will then be transformed into one of the lords of creation. His bearing will be erect, his eye clear, and his purse full; his garden will have flowers, and his shirts will have buttons. Instead of dead flies, stale crumbs, and grease-spots, there will be a clean cloth

on the table, and strawberries and cream in the dishes.' "*

"Nothing short of a hard-working Indian or half-breed wife could do all that without a hired assistant," said Evans; "and those don't seem capable of *mending* clothes, even when they have been taught to *make* them."

"Don't you think the daughter of an English working farmer might do?" said Holmes.

"I do not think they get through so much work as even the Canadian fashionable town girl," said Evans, "and all the time she looks as neat and pretty as if she had a dozen servants to wait upon her. But you would never get one to come and live in this sort of lonely situation; they can do better for themselves. Nor, for the matter of that, would you ever get an English farmer's daughter to come out to live in such a house as this, if she had any idea of what she was coming to."

"Well, we none of us had that," said Holmes, rather ruefully.

"Because we were all fools," said Evans, "and did not take the trouble to read anything about the

* This description appeared in a Manitoba paper called *The Pilot Mound Sentinel.*

country before we came. And we have all been brought up too comfortably at home, and have been too much waited on. A Christ's Hospital boy, who has made his own bed and cleaned his own shoes, is the man to make a good emigrant in the North-West."

Evans by this time had smoked his evening allowance of tobacco, and it was growing very dusk. Holmes had no fear of losing his way among the bluffs going back, for he could catch a sight of the wooden spire of Qu'appelle church over the low trees. Where, indeed, are such landmarks more needed than on the prairie? And doubtless the original object of spires was to guide the traveller to a place where he could find rest and refreshment for body and soul. Some of the highest in England are in and around districts that were once large forests, where they had need to be high, to be seen above the stately elms and oaks.

Then Evans suddenly remembered that you cannot get a meal in a North-West hotel unless you take it at the regular hour. The hotel-keepers could not afford to put you up on such reasonable terms as they do, and keep so few servants, unless they followed this rule, and fed all their guests at the same time.

So he began to make some coffee, and found he had a little bread left, with some butter and eggs. "One advantage," he said, "in living near a town is that we can buy bread, and very good bread too; the dry air makes it so light. If you get far up the country, you often have to do with bannocks (a sort of scone made with soda); there is a difficulty in getting barm, and then a settler does not always know how to bake."

Holmes ate his supper with the splendid appetite which men acquire in the North-West, and only wished there had been more of it. He again asked what Evans wanted him to do when he arrived first thing the next morning.

"To help me all the way along," said Evans. "There is the stove to be lighted in the morning, and some sort of breakfast to be got; the cows to be milked, and then let out; the fowls to be fed, and eggs collected; the pigs to be fed, house swept up, sometimes washing to be done—but as I never sleep in sheets nor use table-cloths, I have not much to wash. Then reaping ought to begin, and some dinner and supper cooked: for I am growing as thin as a bean-stalk from the sameness of my diet—bread and cheese or cheese and biscuit every day. And when

there is time for it, I want butter made, and some of the milk taken to the creamery in the town. On Sundays we would dine at the hotel in the town, but it would waste too much time to do so during the week."

Somehow, odd as it may seem, this scrambling sort of establishment was more attractive to Holmes than Freeman's larger farm, where he had been expected to do one thing all day. The variety of work was a relief; he also felt he should find a congenial companion in Evans, whose ideas went a little further than the price of corn and stock.

"Why," he said, after a moment's pause, "I think I had better stop here to-night. You evidently want me very early in the morning, and I may oversleep myself at the hotel."

"I was just thinking the same thing," said Evans. "There is the shakedown for you; and to-morrow evening you can go and fetch your baggage when the work is done."

That night when Johnnie in Farmer Freeman's attic was dreaming of his home, William Holmes's midnight wanderings carried him back to the neighbourhood of a rosy-cheeked maiden who was expending no small amount of her musings upon him. And

as he went through his hasty toilet when he had been roused from his slumbers by the "boss," he reflected to himself, "She would put up with the loneliness, and the busy life without luxuries, for the sake of being with me. How could I toil in discomfort and alone, year after year, like those bachelors described in the Manitoba paper, without some one to work for, and to look pleased when I came in from work? It is all nonsense to suppose that any man can care to lead a life like this, away from his own country, simply for himself alone I might do that as a porter or navvy in England. I fancy Evans does not mind, because he looks to getting enough to enable him to live in England when his father dies. Boys like Johnnie hope to get their parents and whole family out after a time, when they have got a decent sort of place to put them in. But as for me, my sisters are marrying in England, and my uncle would not let them come out here even if they remain single."

Holmes and his sisters were orphans whose parents had died in India, leaving only enough for their children's education, and a little just to start them. Their home was with an uncle and aunt, and Holmes was to receive five hundred pounds when he was five-and-twenty, by which time it was supposed he would

have seen enough of Canada and of a farming life to know how to spend it judiciously. His uncle had impressed upon him before he started that this was all he could ever hope to receive from any of his relations, and that it had only been saved for him because he had been educated at home without much expense. He must, therefore, rely upon himself.

CHAPTER VI.

THE INSPECTOR'S STORY—LOST IN THE SNOW.

JOHNNIE'S first letter came after he had expected it for months, but it did not contain very good news. His mother said she should have written before, but his father had been very ill, and obliged to give up his work. Some kind ladies had sent him to a little seaside place in Kent where there was a Home of Rest for sick postmen; but as it was rheumatism he had been suffering from, she felt very much afraid that when the winter came on he would be invalided again. There had been strikes among the colliers in the north of England, and it had made coal so scarce and dear that she thought she had not kept the house so dry and warm for him when he came in late at night after walking all day as she should have done; but she could not help it. She

read what Johnnie said about cutting wood close by when they wanted fuel, and she thought how nice it must be to have wood without paying for it, and not worrying about coal at all. The children had all been ill. It had been a very wet summer, and they had been obliged to keep in the house a great deal. The day of the school feast, which was to have been held in the park at Richmond, it poured all day. Fourteen cart and wagon loads of children went, and they got so wet in their thin clothes that they caught bad colds, although a barn near had been procured by the superintendent in which they could play and have tea.

Johnnie shed more than one tear over this letter. "How nice it would be," he thought, "if father and mother and all the children could come out here!" He told Mrs. Freeman of this idea, and she encouraged it. "No one suffers from rheumatism here as they do in England with ordinary care," she said. "Your father would very likely be quite well if he came to the North-West, so long as he did not live in a valley, close to one of the rivers or lakes."

"They don't want postmen here," said Johnnie, "so he would have to find some other employment."

"Well, he might get employed in a post-office in

some town, as he is used to the work; but there are many other things he might take to, and meanwhile if he settled in the country he might occupy a homestead, which your mother and the children could make answer with some live stock," said Mrs. Freeman.

Johnnie took up very warmly this idea of his father coming out and settling on land of his own. He was trusted to take the wagon with corn into the town several times, so he took the opportunity to go and speak to an emigration agent. A young man was in the office, and Johnnie asked him whether any reduction was made for a whole family of emigrants.

"I suppose you are like most of the boys here," said the young man—"sent off from home because you could not get on with your parents, and now repenting yourself and wanting to have them out."

"I was always a good boy at home," said Johnnie.

"Indeed!" said the other, rather sarcastically; "then I hope you will always be a good boy out here. But let us see what it is you want to know—how to bring them all cheapest from England? This is a good way inland, more than half across to the other side. Nine pounds pretty nearly for each of

the old people,* children half-price, and babies ten shillings each on board ship and nothing on the train. But the government talk of giving a bonus to married people who bring out a family, and if this comes into force next spring, that will be some help; and they won't surely think of coming out before the river is open to Quebec!"

"Oh no," said Johnnie; "it is not quite settled yet that they come at all, only I hope they may," and thanking the young man, he left the office, counting as he went along how much he should have saved by the next spring, and be able to send to his father to help him on the journey.

But only the next day Mr. Freeman told Johnnie that now the winter was coming on he did not require him any longer, for his clothes were not suitable for work out of doors in very severe weather. Still if he would engage himself to work all the summer for the same wages that he had given him that autumn, or perhaps a dollar more, he would keep him for nothing through the winter months.

This was a great shock to Johnnie. All his hopes of saving money in the winter fell down like a house of cards. He had fully expected the farmer to con-

* The steerage fares have lately been increased.

tinue to give him just what he was doing then. "Oh," he said, "then I must go somewhere where I can get wages. I can't do without them."

"But you see," said Freeman, "you are but a little fellow, though I daresay big enough for your age. You won't get wages anywhere on a farm in the winter, when people try to save all they possibly can."

"Well, then," said Johnnie, "I must go into a town." So it was settled he should leave at the end of the week.

Johnnie being a town boy, and also very busy, had not noticed all the signs of approaching winter. The frosts were already very sharp at night, but the bright sun in the daytime melted everything again. People said they had never known so long an autumn without snow, but before the week was over there was a very heavy fall. The wood had been piled up close to the house, the fowls were in a sort of underground place close by, and the cows were in a hay-lined stable. The pigs had been killed; and as scrubbing the floor had to be given up on account of the hard frost, it certainly did not seem as if there would be anything more to do than the farmer and his family could easily manage themselves without any hired help.

"I don't quite like the idea of Johnnie going," said Mrs. Freeman to her husband; "he is a good, useful little boy, and he will never get work elsewhere. We shall hear of him as being frozen on the trail."

"He is a very self-confident fellow," said the farmer; "and as he has struck for wages, I think we had better let him be off. If he waited till midwinter, and then took it into his head to go, why, he would be pretty certain to be found dead in a snowdrift; as it is, even if he goes and tells every one I have turned him out, no one can say I have acted hardly by him. I shall have paid him wages up to the last moment. And the weather is still mild enough for him to travel safely, if he doesn't waste his time on the road."

"Couldn't we send him into the town?"

"If he chooses to go to-morrow, I can't; but he can have a lift part of the way, and anything he likes to leave behind, why, we can keep it for him," said Freeman. "I expect we shall see him back again, asking to be taken on again before long. I hear that Holmes has been engaged by Evans, who wanted somebody. I daresay they will get on well enough together; but he was too much inclined to boss it here."

The next day it began to snow—large white flakes which completely obscured everything, and except feeding the animals, nothing could be done out of doors. Late in the afternoon a traveller appeared with a horse and cart, but the light snow prevented their approach being heard till they were close to the house. He was an elderly man, and walked in as a matter of course to take up his quarters in the farm for the night, although no one at Freeman's had ever seen him before. He certainly could not have been refused admission, however inconvenient it might have been to lodge him on such a night as this; and no one in Canada would think of refusing a bed, or space for one, to a traveller in a storm. As it was, he turned out to be an inspector going his rounds, with plenty of amusing stories to tell of the wild old times in Manitoba and the North-West, when big game and small were plentiful, and there was no need to grow pigs and sheep, for every one could get buffalo and venison for dinner who had a gun. He talked of the Indian chiefs who lorded over the North-West in the days when he was young; and of the European outlaws and the runaway negro slaves from the United States who fraternized with them, and tried to set them against the English settlers.

"One could not grow much corn in those days," said Freeman, "with buffaloes overrunning the place, and Indians about, ready to scalp everybody."

"Well, there wasn't so much of that done," said the other, "as was reported; only people wanted to clear them out and get hold of their lands. The English race had outgrown the old island, and wanted elbow-room, and imagined that it could get some easily here. It was thought that the Hudson Bay Company's officials had exaggerated regarding the climate on purpose to prevent people from coming here, and to keep their old monopoly."

"Well, maybe they were right, and we had all better have gone further south," said Freeman. "But as we are here, we must make the best of it."

"Bless you, man," said the other, "you are all too impatient. Look what a stride the place has made since the seventies. I should have been as rich as Vanderbilt if I had invested my first savings in a whole section round Fort Garry, as we then called what is now Winnipeg. My first venture in furs was to buy them for the American town of St. Paul, now twin with big Minneapolis, and a tragedy was connected with that journey which I shall never forget as long as I live."

"Tell it us," said Freeman.

"Well, you must remember there was no C.P.R. in those days. The mail from the east came to Fort Garry from Abercrombie on horseback or by wagon in the summer, and by dog-sleighs in winter. One day in the winter of '68, as I was going towards the fort, I met a trader named Bob. We were great friends.

"'I say,' said he, 'have you heard how fox-skins have gone up in St. Paul's? That's the place to sell them in. Let's go there together next week.'

"We had both of us been buying skins for some time, and keeping them till the Hudson Bay Company's agents were willing to give us a better price. Of course if other folks had known how much was being offered for them in St. Paul's, there would have been a rush there, and the market would have been swamped. As it was, we bought them up cheap in our own settlement.

"We required three sleighs, for each of which we had twelve dogs, with the proper harness, and we engaged a half-breed runner to go with us.

"We crossed the Assiniboine on the ice after leaving Fort Garry, and ran along the banks of the Red River. Some of the French half-breed settlers

came out of their log huts, as we rushed past them, to wish us '*Bon voyage*,' or wave adieu with their hands. One of these huts was really a neat little cottage, and a bright-eyed, rosy young woman came out and waved a kiss to us with her hand. 'Adieu, my friends,' she said in French. 'If you meet Louis, give him this. Tell him I am well, but longing for him.'

"This happy little woman was a model wife, who knew how to make the mail-carrier comfortable when he returned from one of his regular trips.

"They had been married only a few months, and she was proud and fond of her Louis. He was a handsome, generous-hearted young fellow, one whom everybody liked. The road was very desolate, but we meant to contrive so as to get into a wood to pass the night, not to spend it on the open prairie. We ran most of the way by the side, you must remember, for our sleighs were loaded with about a thousand skins.

"We were making all the speed we could to reach the woods before night, when we saw a dog-sleigh approaching, and recognized Louis, the mail-carrier.

"'Hullo, boys! where bound?' he cried as we met him.

"'For St. Paul,' I answered. 'Did you leave a good place for us to-night?'

"'Yes,' he said; 'you will probably find my fire still burning in it.'

"I then told him we had seen his wife, and his face beamed with pleasure. 'Poor Mary!' he said; 'she leads a lonely life. I have half killed my dogs trying to get back to her to-night.'

"It was true. His dogs were nearly spent, and there was still a great piece of bare, snow-covered prairie to be crossed.

"'You will never get there to-night,' I said, 'it is so late. Your dogs are played out. Come back, Louis, and we will have a pleasant evening.'

"He yielded somewhat reluctantly to our persuasions, but it was clear his dogs could not manage the longer distance; and we all three reached the camp before dark. It was a sheltered spot, and we soon blew up the still smouldering embers into a big roaring blaze. I cooked the supper; Bob and Louis fed the dogs; and when we had all taken our meal, we told stories of adventure to each other till we fell asleep. Louis's stories and songs were the best of all.

"Bob and I slept so soundly that Louis got up,

boiled his tea in the morning, and had started off with his dogs and sleigh before we were awake.

"When we did get up, the wind was blowing a hurricane through the trees. It came from the north-west, so Louis would have it in his face. However, we did not trouble much about him; for we thought he had carried the mail for some years, and come to no harm. We cooked our breakfast, ate it, and harnessed the dogs, and were ready to start, when a ghostlike howl of the elements almost startled us. I looked at Bob. 'A day more or less does not matter to us,' I said. 'Let us turn back and see if Louis is all right. I wish we had not made him come along with us last night.'

"'Are you mad?' said Bob. 'Are you going to encounter this blizzard on the prairie in search of Louis?'

"'No,' I said, 'I am not an idiot; but Louis must have made for some cover, and we may find him on the river where the steep sides would protect him a little. It is longer than straight across the prairie, but it must be either that or death for him. I will look for him there.'

"So with Bob quite in the sulks we turned in the direction of the river where the snow was in drifts,

and it was a great strain to the dogs. Sure enough we found the dogs' trail; but Louis usually walked, and we could not find his steps. Perhaps, we thought, he had jumped on to the sleigh for a mile or two; but we went several miles, and there were still no man's tracks. Louis, we thought now, must certainly have been upset, and the dogs have rushed on homewards. We must retrace our steps and look for his corpse!

"Well, to make a long story short, the road was so steep and rough we had to tie our dogs to trees, and make the search without them. There at the bottom of a bank, half covered with snow by the blizzard and already frozen hard, we found the body of our poor friend. He had bled copiously from a cut on his forehead. The blinding snowstorm had evidently prevented him from seeing the steep bank, and he had probably come down head foremost, and struck against a tree. If he had been knocked unconscious, the cold would do the rest. Bob had long recovered from his sulks, and become as anxious as I was. Oh how we both wished in our secret hearts that we had urged him on his way home, instead of taking him back with us! And his poor little woman! The dogs would return without their master, and she,

suddenly and fearfully, would realize the terrible truth.

"We tenderly lifted his body, and I watched it while Bob brought up one of the sleighs on which we could convey it home. This took him some little time, as he had to take the load off one sleigh and divide it between the other two. The dogs were now tired, and the snow very deep, and we got along slowly enough towards the settlement. We were but half-way, when we met a party coming to look for Louis. They had started as soon as the dogs came home without him. We heard from them of the fearful state his wife was in. They thought it would kill her when his death was known for certain.

"As we drew near her cottage, we saw her standing outside—ah, how changed! Her black hair streamed over her shoulders, her face was white, and her eyes had a strained, hunted look of despair as she flew towards us, and gazed on the still form wrapped in a blanket on the sleigh which told her all.

"But I cannot dwell on the scene which followed. We led her at last gently back to the cottage, and when we had lifted poor Louis's body on to the bed, we left the grief-stricken woman by his side to the

care of her aged mother. As we turned our steps from the cottage, we heard through the clear air the chimes of St. Boniface. It seemed as if they were ringing a requiem for the dead—wafting, as it were, the soul of poor Louis to a happier land. Many thanks are due to the good Christians who are now planting many such outposts, but of our own faith, in the once lonely desert of the North-West."

Johnnie listened to the inspector's story, and felt very uncomfortable. He had arranged to go the next day, and to leave his luggage at Farmer Freeman's till he could find a situation, but this account of getting a fatal fall in the snow frightened him. It seemed so likely to happen to anybody in weather like this, and in a country where there were no roads visible when the snow had fallen thickly, as it had to-night.

Why, if the snow had filled up a deep hollow, who was to see it till he fell head foremost into it? So thought Johnnie, but he was too proud to ask the farmer to keep him longer, though all through the night he was dreaming of snow-drifts, and of packs of hungry wolves.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THRESHERS—A NARROW ESCAPE—ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE.

WE must go back again a few weeks, when the harvest was still going on, and Holmes worked as he had never worked before in his life. Evans's crop was not much; but they both helped neighbouring farmers, and the stacking was not finished till the beginning of November. Then the snow came, but it melted again before the winter fairly set in, and the threshing-machines were going the round of the farms till March. The primitive custom of young men holding what the Americans call a "bee," when the machine comes to a farm, is fast being replaced by each owner of a threshing-machine going round with his own gang of men; but this winter labour was scarce, and the "boss" and his hired man made a nice sum of money by helping

their neighbours. This threshing season is so well described by a labourer who went through it, that we will quote what is nearly every young settler's experience:—

"The married men who have cows and pigs, etc., at home to be attended to, come with their teams and wagons and go home at night. The bachelor turns all his live stock adrift to forage for themselves, mounts his pony, taking his fork and toilet apparatus, simply a comb very often, and possibly an ox-hide and blanket. He camps in every house he threshes at, if it belongs to a fellow-bachelor. A corner—the furthest from the door for choice—is bedded down with an armful of straw; on this, covered with blanket and hide, he sleeps as soundly as he does in the bed which the farmer's wife provides for him, when the farm is large enough and belongs to a married man. A shanty twelve feet by fourteen is considered sufficiently spacious to accommodate six men at night, and to cook for and feed twice that number during the day. With the thermometer down in the zeros, there is no complaint about stuffiness. A knot-hole in the wall, not big enough to shove your finger through, is amply sufficient to keep the air of the house thoroughly pure, and to allow a few cubic

feet of snow to trickle through on to the floor, or on the sleepers below."

But whatever hardships there may be, every one seems to keep his appetite; and the food at threshing-time is always as good as can be procured, to keep the men in a good hard-working humour. "As good as threshing victuals" is a common expression, and the cook has a very hard time of it.

The threshers go on till long after dark, and a straw bonfire lighting up the horizon indicates that the machine is busy, often till nearly midnight. Holmes had to go back each day, just to feed some of the animals. He seemed to be farm-labourer, cook, and housemaid all in one, he wrote home to his sisters. It reminded him of the song in which the lonely mariner, sole survivor of a starving crew, cracked his only joke that he was the boatswain, mate, and crew of the captain's gig. But he had taken up his homestead and made acquaintances, and he began to see his way towards making a modest competence in Canada.

It was getting late in December when Johnnie with a bundle in his hand was set down by the inspector within a short distance of Indian Head.

The inspector was driving in that direction, and anywhere was the same to Johnnie if there were farmers or people likely to want a boy. He called at every house he passed—and they stood far apart—ti. .e found himself near the station. The answer everywhere was the same—"We can't give wages at this time of year." No one spoke unkindly to him, and in several houses he was invited in to warm himself by the stove. One housewife gave him a very hot cup of tea and a bannock. But all these houses had as many inmates as they could keep warm in weather too cold to sleep in out-houses, so no one offered him to stay for a night.

It was getting late in the afternoon, and he had already walked several miles, when at a solitary house the owner warned him away, for there was a bad case of measles in it, and only one room for kitchen and bedroom. Seeing poor Johnnie looked very tired, the wife added: "Farmer Wheeler, just two miles off, would give you a bed no doubt, and perhaps employ you. He has some milking cows. Keep straight on, and you can't miss it; but go as fast as you can, for it is going to snow again."

It is very tiring walking in freshly-fallen snow, and Johnnie felt that it was penetrating between his



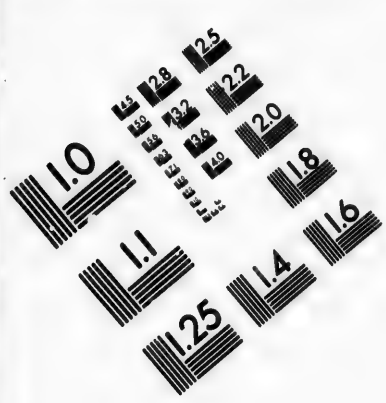
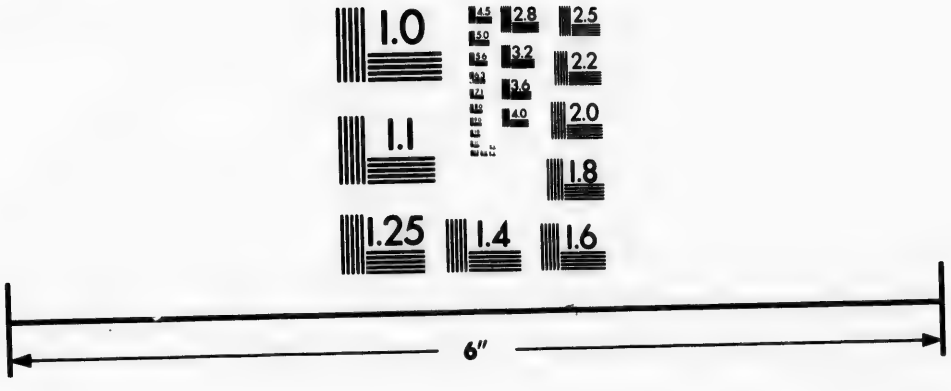
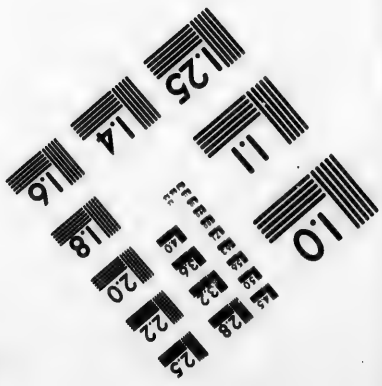




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stockings and his legs, and that they were beginning to get numbed. He must make as much haste as he could. But the snow was now falling again so thickly that he could not see the way. He thought of the fate of poor Louis the mail-carrier, and began to grow rather alarmed; for the sky was covered with clouds, and it was long past sunset. Then there was a sudden plunge: he was off the track, and had gone into a hollow, so was almost up to his neck in snow. He had been long enough in Canada to hear of the danger of keeping still when becoming numbed, and he made a desperate effort to extricate himself and regain the track. But this done, he felt he must give up the game; no passenger or horse would probably come past till next morning, and by that time life would be extinct in him. Yet he could get no further; he was quite spent. He must sit down and die.

Through Johnnie's benumbed brain there came the thought of the brave old knight and Lord Mayor of London who met a lion in Morocco when he was unarmed, and straightway knelt down and prayed to the Almighty to save his life. The lion looked at him and walked away. The knight left a sum of money, so that every year a sermon should be preached in one of the churches in London on the

subject of this wonderful deliverance and answer to prayer; and Johnnie had once heard this sermon, when the date fell on a Sunday. Perhaps the merciful Almighty would deliver him from an equal peril if he prayed with his whole heart. Poor boy! he had enjoyed the blessing of good parents who had instructed him well, so that it was no new and strange thing to him to offer up a prayer. And when he had done so he grew giddy and sleepy, and knew nothing more. Partial consciousness returned, but without reasoning power, so that it seemed only like a dream, in which he did not know exactly where he was or what had happened to him, till he found himself on a mattress wrapped up in blankets on the floor of a strange room furnished like a kitchen, and with English young men, not Canadians, looking at him. One of them said in a cheery voice,—

"Well, my boy, you are beginning to recover now."

"Oh, where am I?" said Johnnie; "who has been so good as to bring me out of the snow?"

"Don't tire yourself with talking," said a kind-looking clergyman.—"Here, Mrs. Ames, you had better give him some hot broth if you have got it. I think his hands and feet will do now."

Johnnie felt a tingling sensation like pins and

needles all over him, particularly in his hands and feet, which he saw were tied up in flannel and cotton wool steeped in petroleum, in default of spirits of wine. Then he gradually realized that two of these young Englishmen had been driving from Indian Head in a *jumper*, or small sleigh which gets over the ground very quickly, and saw him lying unconscious on the trail. They had picked him up, and covered him up between them, and had gone as fast as they could to St. John's College, the residence at that time of the Bishop of Qu'appelle, and also a home for theological and agricultural students.* He had been brought into the kitchen, and his feet and hands rubbed with snow till sensation began to return; they were then wrapped in coal-oil, as the Canadians call petroleum, and sal-volatile was poured down his throat. No one knew where he came from, or remembered to have seen him before.

"Will you let me stay here?" said Johnnie; "I will work in the house or out of it for nothing all winter, if you will, and part of the summer too. I can clean knives and lamps and boots, and scrub the floor and milk the cows."

* It is still to some extent an agricultural college, but the present bishop lives in a house built for him by Lord Brassey at Indian Head, near to which there is also a home specially for girl emigrants.

"Oh, we shall not drive you off into the snow again; you need not be afraid," said the clergyman. "Your hands and feet will be unpleasantly tender to-morrow; but as soon as you are all right again, we will find you some work. Mrs. Ames will settle where you are to sleep."

"I think, sir, it had better be in the kitchen to-night," said the kind-looking housekeeper. "His circulation won't recover itself just yet.—Well, my boy, you have had a narrow escape, and you ought to be very thankful for it."

"Yes, I am," said Johnnie feebly, his limbs and joints aching and tingling till in his weak condition he felt ready to cry. It was many days before he could walk about without great pain, and it was probably only the care and attention he received at the college during the next few weeks which prevented him from being seriously ill. One of the young students helped him into the chapel, where there were daily morning and evening prayers, and placed him by the stove; and he had so seldom been able to go to church since he came to Canada, that it felt like being at home. Christmas Day had arrived, and the chapel was decorated, and the beautiful Christmas chants were sung in which Johnnie could join—

"Hark! the herald-angels sing," and "Hark! a glad voice the lonely desert cheers." Then there were books of all kinds in the college library, and it was a long time since Johnnie had seen a boy's book, or had had anything fresh to read save the Qu'appelle *Progress*.

When he was able to get about again as usual, he was employed in the kitchen and to wait at table. The principal told him he would try to find him another situation when the spring came on, as they did not require another hired boy at the college; but he would give him a dollar and a half until then, and also a pair of high felt boots to enable him to walk out in the snow, and a thicker coat. These were undoubtedly fancy wages, but the college was a generous home. Altogether Johnnie found himself in clover at the college, for nowhere else would he have been given so much; and he began to grow very fast on the substantial diet, for the hired boys fared as well as their superiors.

When the spring came on, a great many offers were made for him to the principal by farmers in the district. One said he would give him six dollars a month; but Johnnie was told that the last two herd-boys went away from that farm unpaid, so he did not take the situation. Another offered wages to the same amount,

only in cattle; but this farmer was reported to have paid a boy after a year's hard work with a very lean cow, not worth what it was rated at; and at the end of the second year the boy was charged an exorbitant price for forage, which left him next to nothing in hand. At another place Johnnie was told the family lived only on porridge and potatoes most of their time. The end of it was he again took service with Farmer Freeman, but with a promise from the principal that when St. John's College next wanted a boy he should have the first chance of the place.

He was now a year older, taller, and stronger, and had moreover learned his work; so Mr. Freeman promised to pay him four dollars a month. This year he had procured a pony, which would make Johnnie's work much easier in herding, and give him a more frequent chance of being sent into the town to fetch his letters. As St. John's College was only two miles from Qu'appelle Station, the letters were sent for every day; so Johnnie had no difficulty there in keeping his parents well informed of what he was doing. He had also heard again from his mother that they were quite resolved to come out, and that one of the heads of the post-office had kindly applied for them to one of the great steamship companies,

with the hope of getting the passage-money reduced. The result was that Johnnie's father would be taken on as a steward on the passage out, when more were wanted than when coming home, and his mother as stewardess in the female steerage, and the children would be taken free in the steerage in consideration of their parents' services, which must be gratis. Tickets in colonists' cars would be procured before leaving England taking them as far as Indian Head, where the couple could find an allotment on Lord Brassey's land. Johnnie's father, like many postmen, had learned a trade, and he heard he could find scope for it there. Unfortunately there was no church at present (Lord Brassey has since built one), but services were held in a large building by one of the Qu'appelle clergy, very conveniently near to where their shop or house would be; and there was a school also near for the children. They might be expected out in June, so when Farmer Freeman had done with him for the summer, Johnnie could help his father during the winter months.

It all seemed most satisfactory, for just then there was hardly an opening for another handicraftsman at Qu'appelle Station, and Indian Head, a very rising place, was almost as near to Farmer Freeman's. Mrs.

Freeman seemed quite pleased to see Johnnie again, and the children crowded round him to know what he had been doing while he had been away.

"I felt quite uneasy about you that day you left us," said Mrs. Freeman, "and I said to Lambert, 'Why, he's but a child after all, who wants a mother to look after him, and we should not have let him go off to find a place for himself when we knew well enough that no one wants a boy when winter is close at hand.' But Lambert said, 'Oh, he will be all right. The inspector won't set him down in this snow till he is close to a house, and any one would take a little fellow like that in rather than let him starve. He'll learn that we dealt fairly by him, which he didn't seem to know when he left.'"

Mrs. Freeman and her children seemed so glad to see him back again that Johnnie felt a little ashamed of himself. They had been his first friends, and he had acted rather hastily and ungratefully, it must be admitted. But all's well that ends well, and everything was satisfactory now. It would not be long till June and July came, and the Freemans thought they might perhaps spare him to meet his parents at the station, if he could possibly find out which day they were likely to arrive.

CHAPTER VIII.

A NEW ARRIVAL—KILLING A WOLF.

ONE morning early in March, as Evans was thawing the milk which had frozen on his hands while milking, and Holmes was getting the breakfast ready, an English voice was heard at the gate, shouting, "Holloa! is anybody awake?"

"Wide awake," said Evans, going to the door, when he met a young man who had just got out of a gig he had hired at the hotel, and was tucking his fingers inside his collar in the hope of keeping up the circulation.

"The driver wants a dollar," said the new-comer; "can you lend me one? I have no change. How frightfully cold it is!"

Evans produced the dollar, observing, "You have had a long journey and been up all night, so, of course, you felt the cold. Why, you ought to have

Canadian mits on instead of those thin English gloves. Come in and have some breakfast, but rub your fingers alive again before you go near the stove."

The young man thankfully entered the hut, and sat down on the top of a small barrel, by way of a seat, warming his fingers in his mouth, and then rubbing his nose and ears.

"What made you come out at such a time of year?" said Evans.

"Why, they all said I ought to go out as early as possible," said the visitor, "to be here at the beginning of spring; but it does not seem like spring yet," he added ruefully, looking towards the window.

"No, and won't be for another month," said Evans. "Did your friends want to relieve themselves of your maintenance, and think that I might as well have the honour of entertaining you?"

"Well, your relative told my father that young men were so much wanted out here that I should earn one pound four a month, even in winter, as well as my board easily, and two pounds ten in summer."

"Perhaps, if you are exceptionally vigorous for a novice just about harvest-time," said Evans, "and provided that you can find the farmer who can afford

to offer that sum. But when you have eaten your breakfast, just look out, and see what there is to be done out of doors that two men like myself and my friend cannot do perfectly well in the course of the day."

"Yes," said the other, "I suppose much cannot be done in this hard frost, and with all the snow on the ground; but they charge so much for food on the railway, and the journey is so long I have run desperately short, or I would have stayed at the hotel. If you will let me put up here at present, I will pay you back in work when the spring comes."

"No, my dear fellow; I see I must fulfil the part which my relative seems determined to assign to me, and keep a sort of free coffee tavern for his protégés from England. You shall stay for nothing here till the spring comes; and then you might perhaps get a job at seeding for your keep till you have learned how to work. I remember your face, but for the life of me don't recollect who you are."

"Don't you remember me at the vicarage?" said the other. "I recognized you at once though you have grown such a beard, and have got a little frosted since I saw you last; but I was only a little chap when you left."

"Oh, you are Willie Morgan," said Evans. "You have completely altered, but I see a look of your father about you." They then began to discuss home affairs, and Evans heard the latest intelligence of his own neighbourhood. "If you don't write home and complain that I work you too hard and starve you," said he at length, "you may as well stay with me till you have learned how to work and can get wages: for I suppose you don't know how to plough, back a wagon, harness a horse, much less shoe one, or anything else that it is absolutely necessary for you to know before you can earn your living out here."

"I did want to learn carpentering or blacksmith's work before I came out," said Morgan; "but my father was told it would only be waste of time and money, and that growing wheat was the one thing by which to make a livelihood in Canada."

"Well, I suppose it was some infatuated theorist or land-agent who told him that," said Evans. "There is far more wheat grown already than can be sold, and you could simply have commanded high wages at once anywhere in the North-West if you had been a good blacksmith; not perhaps as a matter of course by setting up for yourself in the way people do in England, but on one of the first-class farms. A good

carpenter may get a place in the same sort of establishment, and you would save yourself much expense if you could build your own house with borrowed labour when you take out a homestead."

"If your friend wants a homestead, I will let him have mine for very little more than the registration fee, and he can take up one close to it on his own account as well. There's a chance! I want to see a little more of Canada before I settle down," said Holmes. "I have half a mind to go into the mounted police after all."

Morgan thought his father would advance a little money for farming purposes, as he had such an idea of the prospects in that line of life. So before the day was out, the arrangement was concluded that Morgan should take over Holmes's land, as well as his place in Evans's hut.

"You must allow there is hardly room enough here for three and their outfits," Holmes said to Evans; and as soon as the young spring seeding was over, he arranged to leave the house which had sheltered him through the winter, and seek his fortune elsewhere.

That evening, as Holmes was going round the stock, he found the bones and wool of three sheep in

an out-of-the-way place that he had not inspected for several days. He collected the remains, and showed them with great indignation. "Some one," said he to Evans, "has evidently been helping himself to your mutton."

"Oh, a wolf has been at that—no doubt of it," said Evans. "The wolves are getting hard up, and are remembering that the lambing season is beginning. We shall have them often about now, so we must keep a gun ready and be on the lookout."

The next morning two new-born lambs were brought into the kitchen, to revive them after the cold night. They belonged to a young sheep who had not yet learned to take proper care of her children, and they seemed quite stiff and dead; but after lying several hours under the stove, first one and then the other sprang up, and gave a feeble baa. After a few teaspoonfuls of warm milk were put down their throats, they were sufficiently recovered to be carried back to their parent.

Holmes looked out for several days without catching a glimpse of a wolf, till at last, just at dinner-time, he caught sight of a light-brown object, as big as a large dog, moving stealthily between the bushes and the palings which led towards the sheepfolds. In a

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moment he was in the house again to fetch his gun; but the wolf seemed to have heard the creak of the door, for it buried itself at once among the bushes.

"It is no use for you to stand and watch for him to come out again," said Evans; "the wolf is a very cunning beast. He knows as well as possible you are waiting for him, and will try some other way of entry next time. Now don't put your gun down at full cock, unless you wish to shoot us all."

Holmes responded by sitting down to his dinner of potatoes, fried pork, stewed apples, and tea, after securing his fowling-piece. But that evening he went out after dark for the purpose of getting hold of something on its return from winter quarters, when he unexpectedly caught sight of the wolf standing on its hind legs, with its paws on the top of a little gate leading to the fold yard, like the wolves in the tales of his childhood. In a moment he had fired, and being a good marksman, his bullet went through its head, and it fell dead at once. He shouted to Morgan to come and help him to carry it into the house.

"It is a poor, thin creature," said Evans, "and has probably got a litter somewhere near. You had better look about for them; they will only starve."

But the wolf had evidently come from some dis-

tance, for Holmes and Morgan searched in vain for her cubs. The children at another farm did find them. When only just able to see, they crawled cut tumbling over each other, wondering perhaps why their mother was away so long instead of bringing their supper back at her accustomed time. The children tried to rear them like puppies; but rather happily they did not thrive in a domestic state, and some kind of infant wolf disorder early carried them off.

Holmes had got into his head an idea of trying his luck in the "canneries" of British Columbia or Alaska. "Cannery," it must be mentioned, is the Canadian term for the depôts where salmon and cod fish are soldered down in tins for exportation. He was still faithful to the recollection of "the girl he had left behind him," and thought he should prefer an occupation in which she would not have also to work hard as on a farm. He might in time become a partner in some such establishment, and then easily take a holiday to go and fetch her. To get to Vancouver from the centre of the North-West would cost him as much as it did to come out from England (for where the Canadian Pacific is without competition the fares are augmented); but when Holmes was living at Regina, he had made acquaintance with

some young men who were now getting up a dramatic troupe among themselves, and hoped by performing at the principal towns on the road to be able to pay their expenses and have a little in hand also.

"You see," said Holmes, as he explained this to Evans, "they are coming over here, and we shall have our first piece in the Emigration Hall. Then we go on to Regina, Moosejaw, Swift Current, Medicine Hat.—What are you laughing at, Morgan, in that idiotic way?"

For somehow that name Medicine Hat always did make Morgan laugh.

He had once been to a lecture on Canada, and one of the speakers who got up to propose a vote of thanks had made a curious (or wilful) mistake, and talked of handing round that Medicine Hat.

"Well, you have not got much to lose as yet," said Evans; "so if you choose to become a strolling player, I don't see why you should not. That a rolling stone gathers no moss is an old proverb left on the other side of the Atlantic, for almost everybody rolls here except myself."

There were people in the neighbourhood who affirmed that Evans was really making a good deal of money by lending what he had got at high

interest, and that he only made a pretence of farming to cover his real trade. But people are very ill-natured in the stories which they delight to tell about each other, when there is not much else to be talked of, and they are tired of speculating about the harvest; so this story, like many others, was possibly invented only for the sake of having something to say. Evans himself had a very good rule, to be commended to all new settlers: that he never believed anything to the detriment of anybody which he heard second-hand, unless he was also shown most convincing proofs.

"The principal farmer in our parish at home," said Morgan, "is thinking of coming out to Canada. He is doing well; but, of course, he would prefer not to pay rent, and he thinks, knowing so much more about the matter than the young men can possibly do out here, that he would be sure to get an inspectorship, or possibly be given the superintendence of one of the government experimental farms."

"Well, my advice to him," said Evans, "would be that, if he is doing well at home, he had better stay there. Men who have got a position don't like beginning again here, and yet if they start from the top they get preyed upon by those under them, and

lose a great deal by mistakes. 'Canada for the Canadians' is a favourite idea, and the government prefers those who have been long in the country."

"And from what I have seen and heard," said Holmes, "no one out here takes to a fellow if he piques himself on doing anything better than other people."

"If he is supposed to come out with money," said Evans, "he is sure to be the victim of every kind of adventurer; and if he sets up to be clever or well-informed, it is to make others jealous, and determined to show him that he really knows nothing at all. The great dread of Anglo-Canadians is lest they should be bossed. Advise your friend to send his young sons and daughters out, to make their way like you and me; but he had better stay at home himself, and be prepared to give them a helping hand when they want it."

"I wish a few more cooks could be persuaded to come out," said Morgan, with a sigh.

"I suppose you are thinking of the flesh-pots of Egypt," said Evans. "Work hard, and then you can some day fetch back a wife from England, and I am sure we may trust you to choose one who is a good cook."

CHAPTER IX.

AN EXPEDITION BY THE MAIL-COACH—AN AMATEUR HOSPITAL.

HOLMES had made every preparation to leave Evans's farm and start for Regina, when he received a notice from one of the players that the troupe was already complete, and they did not want him. A young man fresh from England, able to sing all the new comic songs, had offered himself; so he had filled up the vacancy, and would be of more use to them. Holmes was almost in despair when he heard this. He had been reckoning upon large audiences, thunders of applause, and abundant receipts as a natural consequence. Now he saw no immediate prospect of leaving the farm, of which he was heartily tired. But the next mail from England brought a letter to Evans from a rich friend who had heard a good deal about the district round Prince Albert, and

not content with the official reports, wanted Evans to send a man whose opinion he could rely upon to survey it, with the idea of perhaps making a profitable investment there.

"I wonder how much my friend expects to spend on making this special investigation?" said Evans, in a sort of soliloquy. "It will cost more than the interest he will probably get for his money for some years to come."

"I would go for only my bare expenses, and bring you a most minute report," cried out Holmes. "Temperature, barometer, soil, trees, corn, fruits, all should be taken into consideration. It is exactly the sort of job I should like."

"Very well," said Evans, "you shall have it. You must start in the next mail-wagon for Prince Albert, and I will pay the return fare for you and a week of hotel billets. Anything else you must pay yourself. I expect even the expense of the journey will rather astonish my friend."

The Prince Albert mail waited for passengers in front of the Leland Hotel and close to the railway station. It was an open wagon drawn by four horses, and the front part held the baggage and the post-bags. There were seats to accommodate four

passengers in the back part. They were certainly rather closely packed; but on this occasion Holmes was the only traveller, except a man who took care of the mails and sat by the driver. The Prince Albert trail was a broad one, with plenty of room for other vehicles to pass, and after leaving the prettily-wooded neighbourhood of Qu'appelle Station, it debouches on to the bare prairie, which stretches away for twenty miles to the valley of the river that gives its name to the whole district.

"What a lonely road!" thought Holmes. Gophers and rabbits were sitting on the track as peacefully as possible, and only just scuttled away in time to avoid the wheels. Presently they came to a very steep hill which led down to the little town of Fort Qu'appelle, prettily situated on the river, and where the mail-wagon would put up for the first night.

Within a few minutes of the arrival of the mail almost all the inhabitants of the place seemed to have assembled in or before the post-office, in front of which it stopped. One man came up to Holmes and asked him if he were looking about for work; and on the latter replying in the negative, another inquired if he had been long at Troy.

Holmes thought the query meant some joke which

he did not understand; but he subsequently discovered that the original name of the town known as Qu'appelle Station was Troy, till the Canadian Pacific Railway gave it the present designation, because it was the station for the French settlement of Fort Qu'appelle. However, the older settlement resented the plagiarism, and its inhabitants continued to call the younger municipality by its first name, Troy. But the speaker who had asked if Holmes was looking out for work followed up the question by the practical offer of accommodation for the night, which the one occupant of the mail *coupé* thankfully accepted, and they walked away together to a wooden hut a few yards out of the thoroughfare. A kettle was boiling on the stove when they entered, and some eggs and bacon were being fried. A nice-looking girl was presiding over the cooking, and the owner of the hut introduced her as "my sister Rose," at the same time handing over to her several newspapers and letters just arrived. The young lady was naturally very impatient to read her correspondence, and retired into another room to do so, leaving her brother to finish the preparations for their supper, and to begin to eat it.

"You don't mind, I suppose, taking your supper

from off a deal table," said the brother. "If I put on a table-cloth, that poor girl will have to wash it, or I must, and we have both of us enough to do besides."

Holmes told him he had not only eaten his meals from tables without cloths, but had helped himself to potatoes out of a saucepan put on a bare table, in the house of a young settler who did not possess a vegetable-dish.

The conversation in the North-West is said to turn entirely on the crops, and the produce or otherwise of the stock. But in this case it was varied by each asking the other how long he had been out. A glance at the address on a newspaper had given Holmes the information he wanted as to his companion's name. It was Robert Girton.

"Yes, I have been out three years," said Girton, "and expect to do well. This is a fruitful valley, and I have bought my experience rather hardly perhaps; but now I have got a weather-tight house, and my sister is come out to take care of it and of me, and that is quite the best arrangement a fellow can make till he has secured a good balance at a banker's, and can afford to make a wife comfortable.

"I began," he added, "as many men do, and thought

the earth with some thin boards laid straight on it would do well enough for my floor. Then came a cold winter and a good deal of snow, and I had an attack of rheumatism, and could hardly crawl for several months. I wanted to go home, as every one wishes to do when he is ill; but a doctor in England told my father that if I were really as ill as I believed myself to be, the sea voyage and long land journey would be the worst thing for me, and might turn a simply sharp attack into a chronic ailment. He did what I allow was far the best. He sent me some money to have my house properly lifted off the ground and made more habitable, and to enable me to live at a hotel and take care of myself till I was again able to work. My sister also nobly came out to help me, and I think we shall now get along."

At this moment Miss Girton returned into the kitchen with her letters in her hand.

"The English mail is really the one excitement of the week," she said. "It is a terrible blank if nothing arrives."

"Come, now, you young ladies are never satisfied," said her brother. "Last Monday you went to a dance, and on Tuesday to a working party. On Wednesday we both went to a lemon social. On Thurs-

day—well, what was there on Thursday? Why, we entertained some one at luncheon ourselves. On Friday you went to evening church and to a choir practice, and on Saturday to a concert. To-morrow you are engaged again to another dance. We will excuse you, and even wash up the supper-plates ourselves if you want to do up your old evening dress again for the occasion."

"Oh, you must let me wash up," said Holmes, "as a small acknowledgment of your kind hospitality. It is the least a visitor can do. But just tell me, Girton, while Miss Rose is having her supper, what you know of the Prince Albert district; I am on my way to gain information about it."

"Why, there have been government pamphlets enough about it," said Girton; "and Sir John Franklin described it more than seventy years ago, in his journey to the shores of the Arctic Sea. The French tried to settle in it in former days, as indeed they did this district and Cumberland House."

"And why didn't they stop there?" said Holmes.

"Because, as they did not try to cultivate the soil much, they could not live, I suppose," said Girton. "They were hunters and fishermen, and followed the game as it was driven west."

"But I suppose game returns to its old haunts in time?" said Holmes.

"Yes; after a few years' rest it will, as a rule," said Girton. "But it never gets that rest in Canada. Even the close time ordered by the government is hardly observed. Who is to inform against a farmer whose family want food, and who kills a few ducks for dinner in the spring, the very time that everybody is most hard up?"

"I thought that this district must have been occupied by some race or other before ourselves," said Holmes; "for the prairie-chicken and pewit pretend to be lame when we are near the nests, just as the pewit and partridge do at home."

"They probably do it to mislead badgers and other animals as much as human beings," said Girton, "or perhaps more; for I am sure it is difficult sometimes to get them far enough off the gun for a shot. I have been unable to get a rabbit because it persistently sat still in the middle of the trail and let me walk up close to it; and not being in special want of food at that moment, I really could not kill a tame rabbit. One can often catch the gophers in one's hand."

"Do you think yourself that there is a chance of

finding minerals which would pay better than farming in the North-West?" said Holmes.

"There is no doubt that there is a good deal of mineral wealth in some parts of the country," said Girton; "but it was the custom of the French colonists, two centuries ago, to bury some metal or metallic ore in a new settlement with an inauguration ceremony. It is very possible that the massive piece of zinc, weighing forty pounds, unearthed at Cumberland House, and even specimens of gold ore which have been found isolated in different parts of the prairie, have their origin in a similar custom. In Yankee Alaska they seem to make mining pay, but it is at the cost of incessant hard labour and privation which miners could not be found to tolerate anywhere else. The Russian half-breeds of the district are pressed into the service, and are strong, industrious workmen."

"I have once thought of going to those parts to see if I could do better in mining," said Holmes.

"Then I should strongly advise you to think no more about it," said Girton. "You are sure to be outwitted in any speculation by the Yankee in possession, unless you went simply as a peddler or costermonger, selling tobacco and oranges to the miners when they had just been paid their wages."

"Then how can a man make his fortune out here, and be able to marry and settle down like a gentleman?" said Holmes.

"Only by very hard work and economy in farming or any other occupation that lies before him," said Girton. "The late Sir Charles Napier, once speaking of emigration, observed: 'Do you keep a glory hole—that is, a place where you store up candle-ends, bits of string, old rags, broken chairs, leaking cans, empty bottles, or anything else that your neighbours are apt to throw on to a dust-heap? If you are in the habit of saving up all these things, then you may make a successful emigrant, but you certainly will not if you are accustomed to throw them away.'"

Holmes gave a long sigh. "Nobody ever told me that before I came out here," he said; "and at school how one boy would laugh at another boy if he had any such economical ways! I assure you that since I came to Canada I have often wished I could get some of that money back which I used to spend at the tuck-shop."

Early the next morning Holmes joined the mail-wagon again, and proceeded on his journey. The trail skirts the Touchwood Hills, and at one of the

halting-places a young man came up to him and asked if he were a doctor.

"No," said Holmes; "what should make you think so?"

"I asked just for the chance," said the young man. "There is sore need of one four miles away. Have you got any medicine with you? We want drugs, assistance—everything."

"Who's sick out here?" said the driver. "A newcomer is it?"

"It's Warner," said the young man; "he's been here a year, I suppose. He's down with typhoid fever; and his herd-boy has been kicked by an ox, and his leg is broken.—Don't you think," he said, turning to Holmes, "you could be a good Samaritan, and break your journey for a few days to help them? I'm on an important job, driving some ponies down south, and halted there for a drink, only to rest an hour or so. Indeed if I could stay longer, Warner would not have wished it, with my ponies to feed on his pasture and forage."

Holmes hesitated as to what he should do, and looked at the driver, who observed, "It shall be all square if you join again any time to finish the journey. I can't leave the mails; and it is clear the

poor fellow will die if some one does not help him."

"Can't you give me one of these ponies for a time, and then I will ride there on it?" said Holmes.

"They have not been broken in," said the other; "you would be buck-jumped off in no time if you tried one. Can't you walk? You have not much to carry, and it will stretch your legs comfortably after being cooped up in that wagon."

Holmes was young and inconsiderate even for his age, but he was really very kind-hearted, and this sad appeal would have touched a far more selfish man. He at once arranged with the driver to ride one of the horses which were being changed, and arrived at the hut indicated before another hour had passed.

He attended first, as he had promised to do, to the over-wearied horse, and found a feed of corn and hay in the deserted stable. The fowls, attracted out of their winter quarters by a sunny day, were chuckling about; and a few animals on the pasture were all the other signs of life. He then cautiously opened the door of the house.

On each side of the room there was a shakedown on the floor, consisting of a sack filled with hay and

covered with one or two railway rugs. The herd-boy lay on one, evidently in much pain and softly weeping; and the master of the establishment lay on the other, clutching the railway rugs round his neck, and shivering in the chilly stage of fever, muttering a few only half-intelligible words. Their last visitor had placed some milk and water within their reach; but the larder was evidently nearly as empty as Mother Hubbard's cupboard.

To try to set the herd-boy's broken leg was the first task which Holmes attempted. He had broken a bone himself as a child, so could feel all the more for the sufferer, and also well remembered how the surgeon had set about his task. In a few minutes he had cut some very creditable wooden splints, and torn up a sheet to make bandages. "Lucky there was one in the house," he observed. Then finding a board on which tc stretch the limb—it was, in fact, the baking-board—he carefully sponged and dried it, straightened it out, fitted the broken edges as closely together as he could, and then, directing the boy to hold the splints in place, he bound the leg tightly between them, and fastened the leg down as well as he was able to the board to prevent the boy jerking it out of place in his sleep. It was, fortunately, a very simple

fracture. He did all this as carefully and almost as gently as a trained nurse, and when it was done the poor boy, much relieved, drew a long sigh and said,—

"I shall have a sound leg again after all. I was thinking what I should do if it could not be set, and I had to go lame all my life."

"Well, drink some milk now, and try to go to sleep," said Holmes. "I will presently kill a fowl if I can find nothing else, and then I will cook it, and you shall have some. But I must attend to the other invalid first."

"There is a cow that will want milking," said the boy, "else we shall have no milk to-morrow."

"Well, there is time enough for that," replied Holmes, "when I have seen after the boss.—Come, old fellow," he said, addressing Warner, "I think you had better get this dose down before we do anything else. Doctors always give it in typhoid fever," and he offered him a tablespoonful of castor oil; for Evans had pressed a bottle upon him when he started, in case he drank bad water by any accident on the road.

"Ah! I had none," said Warner, "else perhaps I might have saved myself this. But it is not typhoid, I believe, that I have got, but a return of malaria fever such as I had in Africa."

"Oh, you have been in Africa before you came here, have you?" said Holmes. "But you must not talk to me and tire yourself. Here, drink this milk which I have warmed, after the dose, and I will find a little more covering for you;" and as there seemed to be nothing but a heavy greatcoat to add to the railway rugs, he fetched an armful of hay and piled it over and round him. "If you can get into a good perspiration, you will soon be better," he added; "but do lie as quiet as you can. I have attended ambulance lectures in England, and know all about it." With this exhortation he went and milked the cow, which had found her way up from the pasture, and was rubbing her sides against the corner of the house.

Having performed this task, Holmes searched the fowl-nests, and found several eggs; so, as he did not know which were laying, he would not kill a fowl, but fetched a gun out of the house and soon brought down a prairie-hen. But as shot is dear in that part of the world, he would not waste it on rabbits. Instead, he set several snares, the result of which was that some very fine rabbits were trapped before the next morning. He plucked the prairie-fowl at once, and put it on the fire to stew, so that there should be some good soup for Warner, and he and the boy

could pick the bones. There were potatoes, and there were oatmeal and flour and Indian corn, he discovered, in the loft; so he could bake some bread, put on a saucepan of porridge for the morning, make a custard-pudding for the invalids, and then they need not starve.

When these cooking preparations were finished, Holmes made some tea out of what he had brought for his journey, and produced some biscuits from the same source. He also boiled two eggs. The herd-boy had enjoyed some refreshing sleep since his leg was set, and was now hungry enough to take the food very eagerly, which Holmes carefully put in his hands. In default of an invalid's drinking-cup, he gave the boy a second teapot, that he might drink the tea out of the spout, and avoid the risk of throwing some over him if he drank out of a common mug. A cup of very hot tea also succeeded in sending Warner into the required perspiration, and a little later he dropped into a disturbed sleep.

"Well," said Holmes to himself, "necessity is the mother of invention. I should never have thought in England that I could have cooked for and nursed two invalids entirely by myself."

"We should both have died here," said the boy,

"if you had not come. If you want to go to sleep, I will keep awake and call you if the boss is restless."

Holmes had just been wondering what he should do about his own night's rest, which he felt much in want of.

"You see I can sleep in the daytime," added the boy, "and then, while you are doing things about the house, you can stop me if I try to turn over in my sleep."

This possibility had not occurred to Holmes; but the boy had been in the accident ward of a hospital, and he had seen how great strong men had unset their limbs by wrenching them out of the splints when in their sleep they made vigorous efforts to turn over or rise up in bed.

Several days passed, and Warner seemed to have lost his feverish symptoms, but was as weak as possible, and quite unfit to sit up. Holmes had given him only liquids—milk, of which happily they had plenty, and chicken-soup. His batch of bread was rather heavy. He had not kneaded it enough. He regretted having nothing lighter to offer the invalid, as this was not fit for him—a fortunate circumstance, as any kind of solid food would have delayed, if not entirely prevented, his recovery during the first week.

Anyhow, feeble and reduced as he was, Warner was steadily getting better now.

"I wonder, if all this had occurred in a small shooting-lodge in Scotland, whether there would have been the smallest probability of any one stepping in, able to do everything necessary without a doctor for my ghillie and myself as you have done," said Warner. "We may abuse this country as we like, but it is a good training-school for helpless English fellows. Not that I count you among that category; I should be ungrateful indeed if I did."

"Every man ought to learn a little medicine before he comes out here, that is certain," said Holmes, "if he has no natural gift that way. I fancy I have inherited some notion of it, for my grandfather was a doctor. But my patients have really deserved the name, and helped themselves."

"I got that boy cheap," said Warner, "because he was so stupid no one else could do with him. He's a little workhouse chap, and can't go alone. If his leg had become useless for life, I should have been obliged to get him convicted of something and sent to Stony Mountain, so that the state might have the cost of supporting him for the rest of his days."

This sounded very unkind, only that Stony Moun-

tain had become proverbial among hard-working settlers as a place of quiet, comparative comfort, and good fare. In a country where the poorer class of settlers live as hardly as in Canada it would be difficult to make a convict establishment more ascetic, consistently with the humane principles on which prisons are conducted in the British Empire at the present day. But the prisoners cannot smoke, and that is a terrible privation to a Canadian.

"I should not have been stupid," said the boy piteously, "if I had been under you or this gentleman here; but directly I arrived in Canada, I was sent on to a farm where a brute of a boy was set over me who had been in prison once. He sold things from the farm, and said I had stolen or lost them, so I got whipped. I might work as hard as I pleased at chopping wood, and he pretended that I had not cut a block, and that he had done it all himself, which was a falsehood."

"Well, never mind," said Warner kindly; "I expect great things of you when you are up again. You have had so much time to rest, and nothing to do but to think about your work."

CHAPTER X.

A CANDIDATE FOR JAIL—LIFE ON A RANCH—SOMETHING TURNS UP.

THREE weeks had passed, and Warner was able to do a few light jobs, and the boy's leg was evidently mending well, and in another week Holmes thought he might try to get about with a crutch. Holmes had been each week to the post-house to meet the mails, which often brought bacon, tea, cheese, or other things that Warner had ordered for his farm; but except on these occasions, he saw no other human beings but Warner and the boy, and began to wish to continue his journey. That evening he had just finished milking the cows, when he perceived three riders coming up. They turned out to be two mounted policemen on their way to the nearest town with a prisoner, and they asked for food and accommodation for the night.

Holmes left them outside to water and tether their horses, and came to ask Warner what should be done about them.

"Oh, we must give them what they want," he said. "They will pay all right for it, and the prisoner must have his supper with us too. I hope he is not a dangerous character; for it would be rather awkward if he was, in such close quarters."

The prisoner was a haggard, weary-looking English boy, who seemed on very good terms with his captors. His clothes were old and torn, and surveying his own ragged person, he observed that their clothes and high boots required more brushing than his own continuations would bear; so if they wanted to attend to their toilets, he could put up the horses by himself. "Even the mosquitoes will hardly make them run away to-night," he remarked; "they are regularly done up."

"Why, what have you been after?" said Holmes. "How have you got yourself into this scrape?"

"Simply I made a pretence of attempting suicide," said the other, "and the penalty is two months in jail. I sent an anonymous card to the nearest station, saying that a fellow on Jones's ranch had attempted to poison himself, and would do it again,

unless arrested. Then I got some of the strychnine that was sent up to destroy the gophers and put it in my pocket, and a little more in a paper by my side. I made myself sick with cramming a stick down my throat, and lay in the hut retching and holding my sides as if I were in frightful pain. Two police were sent to look for the fellow who had attempted suicide, and found me with the strychnine by me; so here I am being taken a journey at the government's expense, not my own; and my boss will have to pay my wages, which I do not believe he would have done without a magistrate's order. I shall now have a pleasant two months in jail, or probably only in the police barracks. I shall have some amusing fellows to talk to and nothing to do compared to the work one has often to get through on a farm, with much poorer keep."

"Then you do not mind the discredit of going to prison?" said Holmes.

"Anything," said the other, "is better than the lonely life I have led for a year on a ranch. I shall easily get work in the town when I have served my time, and I saw no other way of escape from another summer of it but this little *ruse*. The idea of a man who has been at an English public school, and the son and grandson of English professional men, being con-

demned to such a life as that! Why, a British ploughboy would not stand it!"

"What was there so insupportable in it?" said Holmes, who had once thought of a ranch himself.

"I often did not see another human being for a fortnight," said the young man. "I had to keep watch on my cattle; and if one were missing, the value would be deducted from my wages. I was all day in the saddle, following the beasts about where they could find water and forage. My friends never wrote to me; I never got even a newspaper. Once a fortnight my food was brought to my hut, and now and then I did not even see the fellow who brought it. What was it? Cheese and bread which got as hard as a rock before the fortnight came to an end, tinned meat that went sour, sometimes bacon, a few hard-boiled eggs, or beef that I could hardly have chopped with a hatchet. That was my diet day after day, riding under a blazing sun, often with no beverage but water scarcely fit for the cattle. Some demon will now and then make a few cattle wander off, and then the result of the summer's work is that, instead of receiving wages, you are in the owner's debt! How could I leave the place without money, and without a beast of my own to ride on? If I took his, I should

have several years of penal servitude for theft. Now my plan has entirely succeeded, and I am quit of that horrible ranch for good."

"Do the police know that you were shamming?" said Holmes.

"I think they have a very good idea of it. But they won't show me up. It will be a feather in their caps to have frustrated, as their superiors will be made to believe, a desperate attempt at suicide, and to have preserved a useful subject to Her Majesty's Dominion of Canada.

"This sort of zeal," he continued, "leads to a man's promotion. I mean to write an article for the newspapers about it, and will paint in glowing colours the skill and cunning they showed, and the bold manner in which they confronted the would-be suicide, knowing that he had a loaded pistol with him, and was prepared to defend his right to take his own life by depriving them of theirs. If you can give me a piece of paper, I will begin it to-night."

The proposed paragraph was actually written, and Holmes sent it in his own name to a newspaper of large circulation in Canada, which inserted it.

The mounted policemen were amusing fellows, and gave their entertainers a very lively evening with the

story of their experiences. One of them, a Scotsman, had left a wife and two children in Aberdeen, but hard times had obliged him to cross the Atlantic, and he saw no better opening in Canada than to enlist.

"You see," he said, "if one settles on a farm at once, it precludes him from having any choice as to land or neighbourhood. We really can find out nothing about the matter in England; and where, when once settled in Canada, can a poor farmer spare the money or time to travel from one place to another, the railway fares are so high? The police travel about at the cost of the state. If they serve long enough, they get a pension, and at the end of their term of service they are acclimatized under comparatively easy conditions, and have experience, which is so absolutely necessary for success here."

"But would the authorities have taken you," said Holmes, "if they had known you were a married man?"

"No, I do not suppose they would," said the other. "But who was to tell them? and it really made no difference to my work when there were five thousand miles between me and my family. They want recruits. I see young fellows working their very hearts out on farms, and can't imagine why some of

them don't enter the service instead. I am as good a soldier as any bachelor among them."

"You must see a good deal of the interior life of North-West farms when you are about on expeditions like this," said Warner.

"Well, we do," said the policeman. "We are generally most hospitably received, and feel sometimes that our money is even a help. 'Look well before you leap' is an expression often used about enlisting; but I should say a man ought to take a much longer look before he invests his money in Manitoba and the North-West. A homestead is a different matter."

Holmes began to ask questions about the district round Prince Albert, where both the policemen had been stationed for some time. As the conversation was proceeding, Warner put in that he had made a survey of this district himself, and had all the sketches and details properly classified connected with the survey in his possession. If the mounted policemen could bring the facts down to date, why should Holmes trouble at all about going there, wasting his time and money?

"You never told me before," said Holmes, "that you knew anything about Prince Albert, or that you had ever been there or had any notes."

"What would have been the use?" said Warner. "You have hitherto had quite as much as you could possibly do without copying my notes; and perhaps if I had offered to give them to you, you would have gone back to Qu'appelle at once! You shall have them in the end, if you will stay here till I have got up my strength and the boy can walk. It was Providence that sent you here, there is no doubt about it."

Warner was still so weak that he became faint if he tried to put anything on the stove, and Holmes had cooked for the party, besides looking after the stock. Warner had not said much about being grateful before, and Holmes had sometimes wondered if he at all appreciated the inconvenience and self-sacrifice that the delay in his journey had been to himself. The boy had been more effusive. "I can never thank you enough," he often said; "but if you like to engage me, I will be your servant for ever so long, and not mind about wages."

The mounted policemen went off the next morning, with their prisoner as gay as a lark, and on a third horse, keeping up with them as well as he could. He had risen early, lighted the stove, put on the porridge, made the coffee, and fried the eggs and bacon;

so that everything was ready for breakfast when Holmes came in with the milk-pails, and the two mounted policemen had only just roused up. He seemed in the best of spirits, and whistled a tune while he set the breakfast things, with overflowing delight at returning to the haunts of men. "It is not good for the man to be alone." We have this on the highest authority. Why do the Anglo-Saxon race try to set this ancient truth at defiance when they settle in the colonies, and not place their houses rather nearer to each other, in the fashion which is universal among foreigners? And why, oh, why do they forget that they come of a Christian nation, and allow their boys to remain for months in solitary situations without a chance of joining in a Christian service?

As soon as the mounted policemen had ridden off, soon after breakfast, Holmes remembered that it was the mail-day, and set out for the post-house. It was quite a heavy mail. There was a letter from his sister enclosing a postal order for ten shillings, and hoping that he would not be offended, for she sent it as a birthday present. Holmes could not help chuckling to himself at the idea of being supposed to possess such an inconvenient sort of pride. There

was also a newspaper for him, and several thick business-like letters for Warner. The poor little herd-boy never heard from anybody at all.

Warner read his letters with more interest than usual, but he said nothing about their contents till after the mid-day meal, when he told the herd-boy to go and try the crutches which Holmes had ingeniously made for him outside the house. He then began :—

"I do not think I have ever told you how extremely grateful I am for all you have done here. Without your care and help I should have been a dead man, and the boy crippled for life, if not poisoned outright by being unable to remove my corpse. All my stock would also have got away or been starved. You did all this for me, probably thinking that I was as impecunious as many other fellows out here, and that you would never receive even ordinary labourers' wages for your work. I know, too, that a man getting well is uncommonly cross and ungrateful, and that I am no exception. But you have put up with it all for sheer charity, looking, I suppose, for your only reward in a better world. I have been casting about in my own mind to think of some way of acknowledging your services,

and these letters have suggested one. I am, after all, better off than many, for I am heir-presumptive to a good property in England; but my uncle, rather disgusted that I could not pass the competitive examination for the army, would help me to nothing else but to farm—first in Africa, which upset my health, and then out here. He has let me have an allowance so long as I stuck to it, when I assured him I should starve without. As you see, I have not wasted much on superfluous luxuries, so I have a very fair balance at the Imperial Bank in Winnipeg just now. One of these letters, written for my uncle, tells me that he is ill, and thinks I had better give up this farm and return home, and he will make me his agent. The agent has really a beautiful house, with a splendid fruit-garden in his park. It is a post anybody might be glad to take. Well, I shall go home as fast as I can, and I will give you five dollars a-week, as well as the wages of that boy, and a dollar a-week for his food, if you will look after this homestead for the present, and gradually dispose of the stock until I can find a purchaser. You are a very clever fellow, I am sure, and you have proved yourself a most kind-hearted one. When I get back, I shall try to see if I cannot get you over as my assistant; and when in

the course of time I inherit the estate, you shall succeed me in the agency."

Holmes had seen enough of Canada to feel sure that this offer was a brilliant one compared with any prospect he could shape for himself out there for many years to come. His future seemed assured, and that of the girl he had left behind him. A pretty house in the country, with her garden and bees and chickens to look after—it was exactly what would suit her. He certainly never had expected such an outcome for what he had done from pure good-nature and compassion, reflecting what his own feelings would have been in the sick man's place. He warmly grasped Warner's hand, which was still but a skinful of bones.

"My dear fellow," he exclaimed, "you are indeed a prince in disguise, and it is a transformation scene for me such as I never anticipated in my wildest dreams. But you must treasure up your strength for the journey; for if anything happened to you, all my castles in the air would be knocked down at once."

"Well, I will try to provide for that contingency," said Warner. "I shall write a letter describing you, and asking my uncle to give the agency to you if I die before I arrive at home. He can hardly refuse the last wish of his heir."

Holmes thanked him again. Then he remembered the Prince Albert district, of which he felt still pledged to make a survey; but Warner told him where to find his notes in a locked box in the loft, and they were brought down that evening. Warner had prepared them with the intention of pleasing his uncle by writing a book on the subject; and they were very elaborately drawn up, with maps on a proper scale, sketches, and botanical specimens. Holmes felt they were far more exact than he could have accomplished himself, and as Warner told him he might keep them all and make what use he liked of them, he decided to send them by the next mail with an explanation to Evans; and they proved to be precisely what his friend required.

From this time all went on prosperously with Holmes. In little more than a week Warner felt able to bear the journey in the mail-wagon to Qu'appelle Station, whence he mounted the Canadian Pacific express for the east, and in the ordinary course of time took his passage on a steamer from Montreal for Liverpool. His uncle was pleased to see him, and decidedly approved of his choice of Holmes as an assistant. The stock was sold off and the farm disposed of before the next winter; and

Evans agreed to take the herd-boy, who preferred to go to him rather than to a neighbour, because Evans was near the railway. Holmes had come to Canada first class on the steamboat, and second class on the train; but he was quite ready to go back in the steerage if he could afford no other way, as he found that the land journey would cost him twice as much to leave Canada as he paid to arrive in the North-West. On his road back he stopped to take leave of Miss Girton and her brother, and also of Evans, and at Qu'appelle Station booked direct for Liverpool, with a superior air which highly amused the courteous agent.

"Have you made your fortune already, Mr. Holmes?" he said.

"Not quite that," was the reply, "but next door to it."

"I suppose the old man has bust up, and he is going home to look out for some of the scraps," said a youth standing by, with an intended unfeeling allusion to Holmes's father, who, however, had long been dead.

"Well, I don't expect *you* will get any of them," said the agent. "Mr. Holmes has known what it is to be short, so he is hardly likely to squander his grist when it comes."

"Oh, you are quite mistaken," said Holmes; "it is only that I have got a very good situation in the old country."

A few minutes afterwards the bell of the train was heard, the luggage was packed in, there was the old familiar cry of, "Hurry up! All aboard!" and Holmes was again being carried along on his way to Europe.

CHAPTER XI.

DISCONTENT—TAMING A BRONCHO—A HAZARDOUS ADVENTURE.

ABOUT two years had passed since the events in the last chapter, but during those two years many important things had occurred. In the first place, Johnnie Wilmot's parents had arrived with their family at Indian Head, and after a few of the ups and downs inevitable in a new home in a new country, they had settled down happily, and found they should be able to do better for themselves and their children than if they had remained in Europe. Evans had gone home for a visit, and left Morgan in charge of his farm, with Johnnie to help him.

Morgan had arrived at that very usual stage when the novelty of farming life in Canada had worn off, and as he was not yet doing much on his own account, he began to feel it very monotonous. The

Chicago Exhibition, which was being talked of, had allured many young men from Canada with the idea that they might drop into a good thing there, and Morgan was growing impatient for his employer's return, that he might try to do the same. Johnnie went steadily about his work, and seemed to wish for nothing further than to keep everything in good order as long as his engagement lasted. But though Morgan's people were not rich, they were in the neighbourhood of rich people, and Morgan had shared in all the garden-parties, shooting-parties, and other entertainments which rich people in this country are able to enjoy. When he was at school, he had also had as much amusement in the shape of cricket, boating, croquet, and football as he had of books.

"I had always heard," he said to Johnnie, "that this was a particularly lively part of the North-West; but really from week's end to week's end there seems to be nothing to be done."

Johnnie stared at him with astonishment.

"Oh, of course, I mean in the way of diversion. Why, really, there has been nothing since the cricket-match at the college six months ago."

"Oh yes," said Johnnie: "there was the Canadian Pacific Railway picnic, and the congregational picnic

at the college, and the concert by the imitation Christy Minstrels, and the lecture by the native Christian Hindu priest, and—"

"And the sermon for church expenses, and the collection for the new vicarage; I suppose you count them," said Morgan mockingly. "As to the picnic at the college, it would have been pleasant if it had not poured so persistently all the day. Some rather pretty girls came to help. But the Canadian Pacific affair only flooded the town with excursionists, who cleared out the bakers' and refreshment shops, and left nothing for the inhabitants. Well, I suppose you can get along here pretty well alone for two or three days. I feel I must have a change."

Johnnie had never kept house by himself before; but he had no misgivings about it, and thought that he should be rather glad to be free of Morgan for a few days, and not have to listen to his constant complaints about the dullness. "Perhaps I may stay away for a little more than two days," said Morgan; "so if a letter comes from the boss, you must just open it and see what he wants."

Johnnie wrote to ask his father at Indian Head if he could spare one of the younger children to come and stay with him while Morgan was away.

Warner's herd-boy had got a better place, as he was now capable of managing a team, and the proximity of the railway line made it necessary to have an eye on the cattle. Jemmy Wilmot, the only one who could be spared, was but eight; but he would be better than nothing. He walked from Qu'appelle Station, and with the thoughtfulness of a young colonist, stopped at the post-office to see if there were letters for Evans or anybody else.

Johnnie was in the act of driving in the cattle, when his brother arrived with a letter from Evans to Morgan, and one from Morgan himself. Morgan said he was going to Chicago, and should be away several weeks at least; so if Johnnie could not get on all that time alone, he had better ask his father to find some boy to help him. Evans's letter was written in an amusing style. He was getting tired of the old country already, he said. Every one told him he had grown to look very old. They gave him no peace at home till he had been shaved and had his hair cut. He was worried with the invitations he had to answer. He had suffered from an access of pent-up conversation when he first returned; and now, when any visitors came to the house, his friends begged as a personal favour that he would not refer

to Canada, as he had wearied them all out with it. The younger members of the family had grown out of his recollection, and did nothing but chaff him. But then came a more serious matter. He had invested in some young bronchos, or native horses, from Maple Creek, and they were to be brought by a trainer, who would require Morgan's and Johnnie's assistance to break them in.

Now Morgan was a bold and practised rider, which Johnnie was not. Nothing in the world in the way of an occupation would be less congenial to him than to mount an untamed horse. He looked round in despair. Jemmy suggested that perhaps he could help; but he was promptly quashed by his elder, who told him he had never seen a wild broncho, and did not know what he was talking about. Before retiring for the night they looked at the palisading in the fold yards to see that there were no weak places in it, and Johnnie mended the latch of a gate which would not properly shut.

The next morning the boys were roused very early by a shouting and tramping, and they had only just time to hurry into their clothes before nine or ten young horses arrived at the yard gate in charge of two half-breeds, both on horseback, and keeping the

rest together with voice and gesture more than by their whips.

"Is the boss at home?" said one of the new-comers, as Johnnie and Jemmy appeared.

"No," said Johnnie; "you are not bringing all those horses for us, are you?"

"Mr. Evans was to take what he wants, and the rest are to be sold in the town," said Alexander Stuart, the elder of the two drivers; for the half-breeds are rather fond of adopting high-sounding names.

"Had not you better sell them all," said Johnnie, "and bring some more when Mr. Evans comes back?"

"But he has paid for five," said Stuart; "you will have to choose them for him."

"Then you must leave five good ones," said Johnnie—"worth the money he has paid for them." The fact was, Johnnie felt quite incapable of choosing the best; so he thought he had better rely on the proverbial honesty of the Indian than on his own slender knowledge of the merits and demerits of a horse.

After the five bronchos that Stuart had selected had indulged in a little kicking and plunging, they were separated from the rest and turned into the

fold yard, where they began to gallop round and round, throwing up their heels in genuine horse play.

"Will not one of you stay and help to tame them?" said Johnnie, quite in despair. "Mr. Evans said you would; and they will do lots of mischief if they are left to scamper about here till he returns from England."

Stuart looked at his companion, and asked if he could do with the other five by himself; and after a little consultation it was agreed that if the rest were sold that day, perhaps Stuart would come back for a week. He looked rather doubtfully at the two boys, and asked if there were no one else about to help; for he could not break them all in by himself, and their arms would be too weak. Well, as there was not, perhaps Robert Bruce, his friend, would come back with him; but if he did, they could both of them only stay for one night and day. He hoped they had got a strong gig with sound shafts.

The half-breeds were very successful with their sale. They came back to supper, and afterwards each rolled himself up on the kitchen floor in the blanket which he had brought instead of a saddle, and they both slept without turning round till the

next morning. The bronchos, left all day in the yard, had helped themselves to a large quantity of hay; but they came up to Stuart when he called them, while Bruce assisted Johnnie to draw the buckboard outside the gate. Then laying a firm hold on one of the bronchos, Stuart placed it between the shafts, and the boys and Bruce harnessed it up as quickly as they could. Bruce then jumped on to the buckboard and took the reins, telling Jemmy to get up by his side.

The horse was a very young one, and its first act, when it found itself trammelled with the harness and being pulled forward by Stuart, was to lie down. It was pulled up again by Stuart and Johnnie, and then it began to buckjump—trying to rid itself of the shafts and harness by curving its back and trying to jump out of them. When this was ineffectual, it endeavoured to rush off at a wild gallop; and Stuart and Johnnie both loosed it at once and let it go. Jemmy felt as if his life were not worth a moment's purchase, as the horse tore on like the wind, with Bruce holding the reins in a strong grasp. Yet supposing a buckle or strap gave way or the reins broke, what would become of them then? Johnnie stood watching in the greatest dismay, and almost

colourless, wondering what his father would think if he knew where Jemmy was at that moment.

Bruce skilfully kept the horse along a broad trail, where there was not much chance of meeting anything else, and after going at the utmost speed for about four miles, he directed it to make a curve, and brought it straight back again. Recognizing Stuart, the creature slackened speed as it came in sight of him; upon which he stopped it, and stroked and soothed it. Jemmy, considerably shaken, and trembling as much as the horse, jumped down directly it came to a stand, and fetched a bucket of water; while Stuart, holding it firmly, wiped off some of the lather and foam, and Johnnie and Bruce unharnessed it as gently as they could. It was then put into a stable and fed.

"Will it go more quietly to-morrow?" said Jemmy.

"No," said Bruce: "it will have to be driven a great many times before it will go quietly and safely; and if it is not exercised every day for the present, or nearly every day, there will be much more trouble when you begin again." He then suggested that Johnnie should mount another, and break it in for riding; but Johnnie quite declined to do anything of

the sort. Stuart thereupon mounted it himself. It had never been ridden before, and tried to get rid of him by buckjumping, in the same way that the horse in the shafts had tried to get rid of its harness. Stuart stuck to it as if glued to its back; and when it entirely failed to unseat him, it also rushed off and went several miles, till quite exhausted. Then it trotted quietly back, and allowed its rider to dismount without any further trouble.

"Some people use the whip a great deal more than I do," said Stuart; "but I don't like that way: it breaks the horse's spirit, and it is not good for so much afterwards."

"How did you ever learn to ride so well?" said Jemmy admiringly.

Stuart could not tell him, except that he hardly recollected the time that he could not ride. He had had many knocks and kicks and broken bones while breaking in young horses, but fortunately he had not been out of reach of a skilful surgeon, so escaped being permanently crippled, as cow-boys and horse-ranchers frequently were in many parts of the country.

"We can't stay here after to-morrow," said Bruce; "so one of you will have to keep riding it."

"It does not seem so difficult as to drive," said Johnnie. "Perhaps if I mounted now it is tired I should be able to manage it; but I can't ride without stirrups."

"You must not put on a saddle yet— that will make him mad," said Stuart; "but you might put a blanket on his back as I did, and I will fix stirrups for you. This broncho is as quiet as a lamb really, though a bit playful. You will soon find him easy to ride."

Johnnie was afraid of being thought a coward, and with a great deal of misgiving in his secret heart mounted, while Stuart held it and took the bridle. Stuart led it up and down for a few minutes, and it shifted uneasily under its burden; but when it appeared to have become reconciled, he loosed it. The broncho seemed obstinately determined not to move for at least three minutes, till Johnnie gave a twitch to the reins and put his feet against its sides. In a moment it was off like a flash from a gun, tearing away over the prairie, stumbling, then righting itself, and in a few minutes was out of sight.

Jemmy began to cry; he felt sure his brother would be killed.

"You need not be afraid," said Stuart reassur-

ingly; "you will see him back all right, if he knows his way, when the broncho is tired. It is a very quiet creature."

Johnnie was soon holding on by the mane, which did not mend matters. They rushed past farms and people he knew; but no one tried, or was probably able, to give him any assistance. The horse took a very wide circle, and seemed, as far as he could tell from his inconvenient position—for he had now, like John Gilpin, got his arms round its neck—to be on the way home. They were on the right trail anyhow, and might soon come near the station, where perhaps if he shouted some one would catch the horse. A train was almost if not quite due, so there would be sure to be people about.

Just as this thought had come into Johnnie's head, an ox-wagon was appearing in sight, and the driver on foot, seeing the horse tearing along, tried to stop it with a shout and by brandishing his whip. The trail ran for some little distance parallel with the railway line, and the frightened horse swerved suddenly, and gave a leap over the fence which separated the road from the railway. Johnnie loosed his hold, alighting safely in a soft ditch; while his steed, catching its foot on the top of the fence,



The train was in sight.

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fell straight across the railway line, and remained prostrate, panting and exhausted, if not seriously hurt.

At that moment the deep note of the train-bell was heard tolling, as it always did when the train approached the station. Johnnie, with much presence of mind, was on his feet and on the railway line in less than a moment. He remembered Mrs. Freeman's horse. The creature must be made to move—there was no question about it. If left there, it would endanger the lives of all the passengers in the train, as well as its own. He tugged at its bridle and urged it in vain. Then he must try with all his might to push it off the rail; the train was in sight; the engine-driver probably could not pull up so near. All his strength seemed unable to move the horse an inch. He then tried to push its hind legs off one rail, so as to leave that at any rate clear, when the horse suddenly bounded up and cleared the fence again. But the train was so close upon them that Johnnie, just behind the horse, was caught by something projecting from the train and knocked several yards away, but fortunately again into soft turf on the other side of the fence. There he lay, bruised and stunned; while the horse, much in the same con-

dition, again lay down, this time on the turf, and began to eat the grass within its reach.

The wagoner, a young Englishman, stopped to see if Johnnie was much hurt. He was too giddy to be quite sure, or to feel his aches and pains. He thought he should be better if he lay there a little while; so the wagoner, accustomed to see people not mind a few bumps, proceeded on his way. However, the engine-driver had seen the accident, and was grateful to Johnnie for his courage in trying to move the horse instead of simply looking out for himself. It was too late for the train to be stopped when, coming sharp round a corner, he and the guard first saw the obstruction on the line, and he considered that Johnnie had saved the whole train from being wrecked.

He was going through with it to Vancouver, so he only stopped for a few minutes at Qu'appelle Station; but he had time to ask the stationmaster to have an eye on a brave boy who he was afraid had been seriously hurt, and whose conduct he meant to report to a high official as being worthy of notice. As soon as the train was off again, the stationmaster sent one of his subordinates with a cart to fetch Johnnie, who was found, still confused and drowsy,

lying on the grass. The porter helped the boy, whom, of course, he knew by sight, into the cart, and tied the horse with a long leading-rein at the back. It walked stiffly, and seemed to have no inclination to rush off again. The porter drove slowly to Evans's farm, and asked if there were any one to look after the invalid. Only little Jemmy, besides Stuart and Bruce, who were leaving the next day. And what was to be done with the bronchos? Stuart now agreed that they had better sell four, which he could do in the town; but as this one had been hurt, it must be kept in the stable for a few days, and then it would do no harm by itself in the fold yard. He must bring four more whenever Evans returned; but they would be of no use if left with only little boys, and would damage other people's property. So it was settled, and if Evans suffered any loss by this arrangement, it was really the fault of Willie Morgan, his unfaithful steward.

The next morning Mrs. Wilmot arrived to nurse her son. The kind station-agent had sent for her. This indeed was a pleasure to Johnnie; besides, he felt sure that his master's property would be all taken good care of in her charge. Little did he think that a correspondence was being carried on

about himself between a high official at Vancouver and their own station-agent, who gave Johnnie a first-rate character for steadiness and smartness. The result was that he was offered a government post in that attractive region which would give him permanent employment, with a sufficient and rising salary. It did not fall vacant till after Morgan's return, and then it was gratefully accepted.

"He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much." This was the motto of the high official who placed Johnnie in a post which was a sure step on the ladder of promotion and possible fame.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISIT TO CHICAGO—MEETING AN OLD FRIEND—CONCLUSION.

WILLIE MORGAN had no idea that he would be particularly required at Evans's farm when he gave himself leave to pay a visit to Chicago. Cheap excursion tickets, available for two or three months, were being issued by the North Pacific Railway, which runs south from Winnipeg to the United States; and it was a time of year when there was not much to be done, as a rule, on a small farm like Evans's. He also knew that Johnnie was a very careful, trustworthy boy. He stayed a night at Winnipeg, and was boarded at the rate of a dollar a day in a hotel near the station. It seemed to be frequented by railway-men, but they could not tell him anything about his journey beyond St. Paul's Junction in the United States. When he asked if

they thought he was likely to find a job in those parts, they did not speak encouragingly. People came, he was told, from that way to find work in Canada, and said that the States were getting overcrowded, and that those of British descent were being undersold by Italians, Poles, and Hungarians (whom Yankees call Huns).

Morgan thought if he got a permanent post at Chicago, he could sell the other half of his ticket to some other traveller going back to Winnipeg. He had been so long in the same place in Canada that he greatly enjoyed a railway journey. Sitting in a comfortable car, and flying along through new scenery, is a very pleasant sensation. At Gretna, the frontier station, some of the baggage was opened; but Morgan's little portmanteau, containing only worn clothes, was not deemed worth inspecting. Gradually as he went southward the signs of winter were left behind, and he came into beautiful autumn weather. The settlers' houses, though still only of wood, were more comfortably built than those in the North-West, and had little gardens round them, showing that the inhabitants had some time or money to spare, and meant to be permanent residents.

Morgan had hoped to get two good nights' sleep in

the train, in order to be as fresh as possible when he started to look for work in Chicago. He had to change his train at St. Paul's Junction, and the only express in the day which was to convey him to Chicago had low, narrow, overheated cars, very unlike those on the Canadian Pacific Railway, and each car crammed with about forty passengers, many more than it would hold with comfort. As to sleep, that was impossible, for on each night there were several young English tourists, who probably had slept themselves till very late that morning, and were quite determined to keep everybody else awake. They sang drinking songs, cracked weak jokes, intended for the benefit of the other passengers more than for each other; and amused themselves by walking up and down between the rows of passengers, and suddenly falling on the top of the most sleepy ones, pretending that it was entirely an accident. There was no person who attempted to keep order, and when Morgan afterwards heard that a train on this same line of railway had been stopped and pillaged by robbers only three weeks before, he thought it not unlikely that the robbers all really came out of one of the cars. He therefore kept a very tight hold on his purse.

He imagined that he had never seen anything more beautiful than the view over the lake as they approached Chicago, with houses and public buildings rivalling the Tower of Babel. But what was he? A mere atom in such an enormous place. He had also been brought up in the country, and was not accustomed to city life. All this flashed across him as he saw the apparently interminable streets, the crowds of carts, omnibuses, and other vehicles, and the network of tramways. How was he even to find an address when he had obtained one? for he had not provided himself with a guide-book or a map. He might well feel uneasy; for Chicago covers two hundred miles, and one street is thirteen miles long. It has fifty-four bridges and more than three thousand miles of side-walks.

Morgan put his portmanteau into the cloak-room, and asked several of the officials in the station if they could tell him where the British Consul lived; but no one seemed to have heard of him. To his next question, as to the address of some clergyman, he could get no answer; and when he asked one after another if he knew of anybody wanting a hired man, he got the same reply from each—that there were lots of people who could not get work in Chicago. He

went outside the station where there was a row of cabs; but as the drivers seemed to be jeering at everybody who did not employ them, he walked past them in as dignified a way as he could. As he turned a corner, a storm of dust met him, filling his eyes and ears, and obscuring everything. Some one had the humanity to give him a push, which sent him reeling on to the pavement, and almost threw him off his feet; for he had been standing on the crossing of a steam-tram which was coming rapidly, and would have annihilated him in another moment.

He had not had any breakfast, so he went into a restaurant to get something to eat. He was reminded that he had been up the whole of two nights by meeting the reflection of his haggard, pallid face in a looking-glass, as he took his seat at the refreshment-table. Everybody seemed too busy to give him any information. The food was being swallowed with the greatest rapidity by the other guests, and each as he finished went straight away. Morgan then turned to the waiter, and inquired if he knew of any employment to be had.

"I can't say as I do," said the waiter, who was a Swede. "There are many out of work here. I

mean to go to Canada and take a farm as soon as I have saved a little money."

"But I thought so many Canadians came to Chicago," said Morgan, "that there must be something to attract them."

"Well, I don't know about that," said the Swede, "but somebody who dined here yesterday told his companion that there were two thousand men out of work. I know a man glad to sweep the streets for ten cents an hour, and he can't do it, on account of the traffic, for more than two hours in the day."

At this moment two well-dressed men came in for luncheon. One of them observed to the other,—

"Unless at least half the people to be employed in this Exhibition are knocked off, the affair cannot possibly pay its way. The fact is, it's a huge job, sir—a huge municipal job."

"Well, if half are knocked off, they will simply starve," said the other. "The prisons are crowded, so are the refuges; the police stations are crammed at night with tramps. The truth is, we get all the refuse of Europe, and they are coming in more every day. It will be an awful winter here, unless we can get rid of some of our unemployed. The world is getting too full, sir; that is the cause of it!"

Here Morgan joined in. "Then, sir, I am afraid that I have very little chance of finding employment. I was going to ask you if you knew of anything for me. I am very strong, and can do all the work of a farm."

"You had better go on to Canada, I should say," said the first speaker. "It is only the colder climate that prevents half the States from migrating there at once. How an Englishman, as I suppose you are by your accent, can possibly seek his fortune in the States, when he has got Canada under the Queen's government to go to, passes my comprehension."

"Unless you want to inaugurate a strike," said the other. "The Canadians don't tolerate strikes as we do here; they have too much sense."

"But I have only just come from Canada," said Morgan. "I am tired of farming, and want to try city work."

"Well, I am afraid you won't get it in Chicago," said the first speaker. "We are swamped with unemployed men. We shall have to take to poisoning them." (This was of course a joke.) "I should say you had better get back to Canada again as fast as you can, if you don't want to starve. Rich as Chicago is, she is not well off for pauper asylums,

and there is absolutely not enough for her own working population of four and five years' standing."

"Unless you could get taken on in the pork business, as a slaughterer, for you look strong in the arms," said the other.

Now killing the fowls and lambs on the farm had never been Morgan's favourite occupation, and he shivered at the very idea of one of the huge slaughter-houses at Chicago, and the horrible, sickening odour which pervades them—his companions low Chinamen. If that were all the work Chicago could offer to a civilized, educated man, why then he had better go back. He was already disenchanted with city life.

He would take one turn down the street, and see a little of this far-famed city before he left it for good. The side-walks were crowded, and he was pushed and jostled. He did not notice how far he was going in this city of sharp contrasts, of log houses and stone palaces, flats of sixteen stories high, of mud and grandeur, where no one is of any consequence but the rich. There was a cry of fire, and some fire-engines rushed past, fearfully injuring a woman who could not get quickly enough out of the way. Then a storm blew over from the lake, and

the rain came down like a water-spout. He had left his overcoat at the station, and tried to get a place in an omnibus or tram-car; but they were all crammed, people hanging on by the straps, and Morgan was very soon wet to the skin. He must find his way back to the station to get dry clothes from his portmanteau; but he mistook the street by which he had come, and wandered hopelessly about. People were rushing past; no one would stop to tell him which way to go; and as to finding a place in a tram-car, that seemed equally hopeless. The rain stopped, but he was getting further and further from the station, chilled and tired out. His stock of money was running very short, and cabs, like everything else, were very expensive here. Still at this rate he might wander all night till he dropped dead of fatigue. He must go into a hotel and ask for a guide-book or a map.

There was a crowd about the steps of the first large hotel he came to. It was evidently full, and many people were obliged to go away. There was a lady in a cab with some luggage. The gentleman with her had gone to inquire if there were bedrooms to be had. No. He was coming down the steps again, and had told the cabman to drive somewhere

else, when he turned round, and Morgan recognized him. Who should it be but Holmes!

Morgan had not particularly liked Holmes in Canada, but in his present emergency he could not have been more pleased to meet him if he had been his dearest friend. A few words explained his situation, and Holmes, as good-natured as of old, insisted that, dripping wet as he was, he should share his vehicle to the station; and he also straightway introduced him to his wife. In this world of changes Holmes had been obliged to give up his comfortable assistant-agency and the reversion of the nice house in the Park. Warner's uncle had died, and the succession duties and other liabilities were so heavy that Warner felt himself obliged to become his own agent to save expense, and to let the family house. However, he had such a strong idea of the diminishing value of agricultural land in England, that he meant to invest rather largely in Canadian estates. He had already arranged to take Evans's farm off the owner's hands, and had appointed Holmes to be his manager and agent in Canada. All this information was detailed to Morgan when they were seated in the large waiting-room in the station at Chicago. There seemed to be so much difficulty in getting accom-

modation, that Holmes and his wife thought they would not sleep in Chicago, but would engage berths in a Pullman car and go straight on by the next train to St. Paul's, *en route* for Winnipeg.

Well, this was a transformation scene—Evans deciding to give up Canada, and Holmes and his bride coming back to it!

"And what is going to become of Evans?" said Morgan.

"Why, Evans is going to be married, and to settle in London or near it. I hear he is about to write a book."

Morgan again expressed his astonishment.

"He always said," added Holmes, "that a great many men came out to Canada because they were tired of nineteenth-century civilization—wearing dress clothes in the evening, and directly a morning suit grew comfortably fitted to one's shape having to give it away because your friends tell you it is shabby, and all that. He said women might stand these sort of things, but it was not every man who could, so I suppose he has found a wife to agree with him. He can, at any rate in London, leave his wife to do all the visiting, and devote himself to books. The want of them and of English newspapers he always

felt was a great drawback in the North-West, though it has a good literature of its own. But Evans told me that you were taking charge of his farm. What made you leave it?"

"I am afraid," said Morgan, "that the holiday I have taken without leave will not encourage you to keep me on when you take to the farm. I can only say that if any loss has been sustained in my absence, I will pay for it with a mortgage on your homestead, that you made over to me. For the rest, I must apologize very humbly for my conduct; and only excuse myself by admitting that Johnnie Wilmot knows as much about the work as I do, and that I left him to look after the farm, with his younger brother's help."

"But what about the bronchos that Evans told me he had bought, and that you were to help to train, as you were good at horses?"

This a little alarmed Morgan. The letter about them came after he had left, so he had never received it, and had heard nothing of the bronchos. The two young boys could certainly not manage untrained ones without assistance.

Holmes supposed that perhaps the bronchos had not yet been sent to the farm.

"We are not intending to live in it at present," he said, "for I am going to build several more rooms. We, or at least my wife, will spend the winter months at the hotel. I do not want her to rough it as I did, so I shall be glad to keep you on for the present, and I can't myself see further than that. You did not treat Evans well, that is certain, for he relied on you to stick to the place in his absence. But as we have all made our mistakes, it will not do to be too hard on one another. I hope not to remain long *nothing* but Warner's agent, for I will try to have some land of my own. To begin with, I will buy back the homestead, and the more I have the larger the number of men I hope to employ"

Here Mrs. Holmes put in that she wanted to spend the winter in the farmhouse, and to do her own work, and see what it was like. She had learned to make bread, and thought it would be so stupid living in the hotel.

"My dear, you don't know what doing your own work is," said Holmes. "I am afraid you will have had more than enough of it before you have done with Canada."

Holmes and his wife were not encumbered with much luggage, for they had registered it at New

York for Winnipeg, after the convenient fashion which prevails in every country but Great Britain; and they found it safe in the customs depôt when they reached the prairie capital, without having been troubled with it on the way.

Morgan eventually retrieved his character for steadiness and reliability by the patience and skill he showed in his treatment of the spavined broncho till it had recovered, and in taming and utilizing the other four when they arrived. He became a valued partner in Holmes's business, as part of it consisted of a horse-ranch. As to Johnnie, if we could see into the future, we should probably find him a popular member of Parliament in Canada, and even perhaps a Secretary of State, able to patronize instead of being patronized by his old friends. We should also possibly see Holmes and his wife (who we forgot to say was his original and only attachment) surrounded by an increasing family, perfectly content with their Canadian life, and intending to bring up their children as faithful subjects of the Queen in her great Dominion.

The little herd-boy whose leg Holmes had mended, and the youth who had been conducted to prison, also engaged themselves to work for Holmes, and found

that he had a careful eye for the well-being and comfort of his retainers. Each in turn took a trip to England in charge of cattle or horses; but each returned very well satisfied to remain for the rest of his days in his transatlantic home.

The moral is, that many a young emigrant does not fit at once into the right place. But neither he nor his friends should despair. There is work of different kinds to be had, and a little perseverance and experience will show him what he is best fitted for, and what there is from which he can make a choice. Take the first thing that offers, is a common piece of advice, but it really means that he should lose no time before setting to work. The youth who rejects first one thing and then another because he is looking for something easier or more lucrative which has never come, and then rather promptly returns home disappointed, has been made the subject of the one North-West comic song, of which the refrain is,—

"This country's a regular fraud, O,
And I want to go back to mamma."

THE END.

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